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# PSYCHOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS ORIGINS

By

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TO  
THE MEMORY  
OF  
MY PARENTS  
WHOSE LOVE AND SACRIFICE  
LIVE ON  
IN  
THE BEST THAT I HAVE DONE  
OR  
EVER HOPE TO DO



## PREFACE

THIS book has grown from a course of lectures delivered to the Post-Graduate School of Theology at the University of Edinburgh during the Session 1933-1934. The style has been simplified and almost all technical terms omitted in order to make the subjects intelligible to the ordinary reader. This has been done, as far as possible, without detracting from the value of the book to those who are specialists in the different fields of study involved in the various subjects. No attempt has been made to cover the whole field of the Psychology of Religion. Many subjects in the region of religious experience and life are left untouched. Others are treated incidentally in the discussion of more specific problems. All that is here attempted is to bring to the study of the origin of religion and of religious ideas such light as modern psychology is able to give us; to examine the various theories regarding such origins, and to reach conclusions that shall be satisfactory in view of all the interests concerned.

The treatment is not to be regarded as exhaustive. Within the compass of a single volume this is not possible, nor is it attempted. An effort has been made, however, to give every representative theory its due weight, whilst maintaining an independent judgment; to offer guidance to those who are anxious to find their way amid the intricacies of the various subjects, and to stimulate interest in those who are beginning their studies in these fields.

It is too much to expect that the specialists in the different branches of study will be prepared to

accept all the conclusions here formulated. No one is able to state all the truth on any subject. The most he can hope to do is to add a little to the great central light of truth.

A certain amount of repetition has been unavoidable. This is especially the case in Chapters III and IV where the theories of the same writers or schools are examined from different points of view. The differences of standpoint and of the final conclusions, together with the different purpose of the study in each chapter, are sufficient justification for the repetitions.

My debt to various thinkers is very great and some effort has been made in the notes to acknowledge this. But no acknowledgment can fully express all that indebtedness. I have especially to thank my friends the Rev. R. G. Davies, M.A., and Mr. Charles S. Duthie, M.A., for reading the manuscript and making many valuable suggestions.

The College, Edinburgh.  
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# CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
	INTRODUCTION . . . . .	II
I.	THE RELATIONS BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGY AND RELIGION . . . . .	23
II.	PSYCHOLOGY AND THE ORIGIN OF RELIGION . . . . .	39
III.	PSYCHOLOGY AND THE NATURE OF RELIGION . . . . .	77
IV.	PSYCHOLOGY AND THE RISE OF RELIGIOUS IDEAS (THE IDEA OF GOD) . . . . .	109
V.	THE RISE OF RELIGIOUS IDEAS (WORSHIP) . . . . .	148
VI.	THE RISE OF RELIGIOUS IDEAS (SACRIFICE) . . . . .	189
VII.	THE RISE OF RELIGIOUS IDEAS (IMMORTALITY) . . . . .	212
	BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	236
	INDEX . . . . .	241

## INTRODUCTION

IN one sense psychology may be said to be the youngest of the sciences, but in another it may be regarded as one of the oldest. Psychological observation is as old as speculation. The examination and interpretation of his own inner feelings and emotions is one of the oldest occupations of man. Scarcely less ancient is his observation and interpretation of the emotions and behaviour of other men. His existence in a world of hostile forces depended largely on his being able to do this. It may also be said that some of the most recent theories of psychological science are in reality not new. The blessed word "projection," or at any rate the idea which it expresses, is at least as old as Xenophanes, for he suggested that the gods were made in the image of men, insisting, further, that if lions or oxen had gods they would project their own image into them and make them as lions or oxen. Socrates, by bringing philosophy down from heaven and making man and his moral consciousness the subject of study, was insisting on psychological facts, whilst Plato, and still more Aristotle, dealt freely and in a measure of fulness with the psychological and spiritual elements in the nature of man.

Among later thinkers Augustine gave thought its more specifically psychological tendency. His treatment of the Will and of Personality is one of the outstanding contributions which Christian thinkers have made to philosophical truth. Augustine's influence, through the theologians of subsequent days, became determinative of certain aspects of

speculation for many generations. Descartes with his "animal spirits"; Locke with his "innate ideas"; Leibnitz with his conception of Monads which had no windows; Hume, Kant, and the Absolute Idealists were all dealing with psychological factors in the constitution of man.

But as yet the "Science" of Psychology was not born. The principles underlying the various methods of observation; the laws of the mind; the forces behind the mind urging it to thought, were not defined, nor were they understood. This is evident when we remember that the "subconscious realm" and the conception of the "sub-liminal self" only became objects of study at a comparatively recent date; whilst the "unconscious region" which figures so largely in all modern books on psychology was practically unknown forty years ago. Shortly afterwards it began to take its place in psychological thought through the labours of two Viennese doctors, Breuer and Sigmund Freud.

As a "science," then, with laws definitely formulated and a measure of exactness in its calculations, psychology is quite young. Its principles, if regarded scientifically, are of recent date so that it is rightly called the "youngest science."

But it remains to be stated that the last forty years have seen an amazing growth of the young science. Many enthusiastic students have been seeking to reduce mental life and the psychic factors involved therein to exact quantitative measurements. On the basis of this work, they attempt to predict what lines of conduct men will follow under certain defined conditions, or what types of character they may acquire. Some of the more adventurous

spirits imagine that they can succeed in doing this. Professor J. B. Watson, the leader of the Behaviourist School, says that any normal child, if his environment and training are completely under control, can be made into "any type of specialist I might select,—doctor, lawyer, artist, merchant-chief, and, yes, even beggar-man and thief, regardless of his talents, penchants, tendencies, abilities, vocations, and the race of his ancestors."<sup>1</sup> He says later in the same book that this bold statement was meant merely as a challenge, and that in making it he hoped to stir interest in, or obtain support for, extensive schemes of research into the development of child study. Regarding his claim, Woodworth makes the remark that "if at the present time you delivered into his care a number of healthy babies, with instructions that he should make of each a great artist, or a great business man, or a great public leader, I am sure he would be utterly puzzled as to how to proceed. Neither he nor anyone else possesses, at present, the requisite scientific knowledge."<sup>2</sup> Watson's faith and hope, however, are shared by a large company of eager and exultant followers.

With regard to their effort in general, we cannot but perceive that in seeking to make psychology an exact science they are going too far. In the effort to reduce psychic factors to quantitative measurements and to subsume them under set rules and principles, something seems to be taken out of these factors which makes them different. More especially, the element of Will or Purpose has to be eliminated; motives have to be reduced to instinc-

<sup>1</sup> *Behaviourism*, p. 82.

<sup>2</sup> *Contemporary Schools of Psychology*, p. 97.

tive or physical urges; behaviour comes to be regarded as "tropisms" or "conditioned reflexes."

It has to be admitted that most of the bewildering advance of psychological theory in these days, as well as such facts as the improved technique and growth of Experimental Psychology, have been inspired by the desire to make psychology scientific and to range it alongside the Natural Sciences with a definite claim to accuracy and exactitude. One enthusiastic advocate of Scientific Psychology thinks that ultimately all the various disciplines which have a bearing on the mental or spiritual life of man,—such disciplines as ethics, aesthetics, metaphysics and theology—will become merged in psychology,<sup>1</sup> whilst another believes that there can only be two sciences in the scientific era which is destined to come, these two being Natural Science and Psychology.<sup>2</sup>

This effort to make psychology scientific and to reduce its principles and laws to order and regulation is in itself a most worthy object providing no injury is done to the mental facts with which it is concerned. But the task ceases to be scientific if in the process it has to distort the data or leave out of its purview elements which belong to the total state of consciousness which it essays to examine. In some schools, notably the Behaviourist and Psycho-analytic Schools, this is really what happens.

In the vigour of its youth the new science makes light of difficulties and regards all fields as legitimate ground for its advance. It respects no sanctities;

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Leuba. See *A Psychological Study of Religion*, Chapter XI, p. 205 f.

<sup>2</sup> Freud. See *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis*, Lecture 35, p. 229.

is unhampered by any ancient landmarks. Its only loyalties are to itself and to the truth. So it claims all territories as its own, and in the energy of its impulsion it has entered fields hitherto regarded as closed or unexplored. Thus in the field of Social Theory it has claimed a great portion of territory to itself, and made an important contribution to the understanding of the forces and laws of society; the factors that make for the growth of social institutions; and the cohesive elements in social life and progress. In the field of medical science psychology has revolutionized the treatment of certain types of maladies. Psycho-analysis and Psycho-therapeutics are barely of age, yet in the treatment of neuroses and psychic maladies they have rendered service of incalculable worth and the future is still richer in possibilities along this line. In the sphere of education also new principles and methods have been enunciated through the light thrown by psychology on the child mind and on the deep-lying instincts of human nature. In the realm of industry there is slowly being developed a vocational psychology which is rendering great service through its study of fatigue and the effects of routine on the physical and mental life of men. Here also there is promise of still greater service.

In the sphere of religion, psychology has already made a contribution of great value to the understanding of man in the deepest experiences of his religious life. Professor Clement Webb says that the emphasis on the place of experience in religion is due, in the main, to the late Professor William James,<sup>1</sup> who brought this aspect of religious life

<sup>1</sup> *Religion and Theism*, Chapter IV, Note on page 10.

prominently forward in his Gifford Lectures on "The Varieties of Religious Experience," and in this position Canon Raven agrees.<sup>1</sup> Many leaders in religious thought have seen the possibilities of psychology in its bearing of life and thought. Thus, Dr. Temple, late Archbishop of Canterbury, insisted that "we must have a new theology based on psychology instead of logic. . . . Nothing can prevent it."<sup>2</sup> There is no doubt that psychology has much to say on the subject of religious experience and life, but in some of its modern theories it raises many difficulties and creates new problems which it cannot solve. It raises some issues of primary importance. Professor Kirsopp Lake states what is probably the main issue in these words: "The real question to-day is What is religion? The opposing propositions will be: (a) That religion is the communion of man, in the sub-liminal consciousness with some other being higher than himself, and (b) that it is the communion of man with his own sub-liminal consciousness which he does not recognize as his own, but hypostasizes as someone exterior to himself."<sup>3</sup>

In all these fields, then, Modern Psychology is making its contribution and endeavouring to understand human experience and behaviour along scientific lines and by scientific methods. There is undoubted truth, however, in the saying of Professor R. F. A. Hoernlé that "the outcome of all this is confusion worse confounded."<sup>4</sup> If psychology is to

<sup>1</sup> *The Creator Spirit*, Chapter V, p. 137.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Barry in *Christianity and Psychology*, Chapter VIII, p. 159.

<sup>3</sup> *The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul*, pp. 151-2.

<sup>4</sup> *Matter, Life, Mind, and God*, Lecture 4, p. 131. Professor Hoernlé gives us a picture of the activities of psychologists on the preceding page.

make further progress towards precision and scientific exactitude, it must first recognize that its subject matter is such that it is impossible for it ever to become an exact science in the same sense as astronomy, chemistry, and physics are exact sciences. Mental and psychic factors or states never are clearly marked off and fixed entities in the sense that material facts are. Nor can the force behind or inherent in them be reduced to exact measurements, as is possible in connection with the force with which physics deals. There is always an unpredictable element in human consciousness and behaviour. Man is never the mere slave of his environment and impulses, and "the mind is manifestly a quality or power that admits of infinite degrees and variations."<sup>1</sup> It is only by eliminating this element that psychology can ever hope to attain any measure of exactitude. The Behaviourists have seen this and frankly faced up to it, with the result that they rule out all such incalculable elements as will, mind, emotion, and even instinct. If all human behaviour can be reduced to a species of "tropism" as a purely natural tendency, or to a "conditioned reflex," then it may be possible to estimate behaviour mathematically. But even this would not be without its difficulty, for the "tropisms"—such as the natural tendency of a flower to turn to the light or warmth—are purposive, and the moment we bring in the idea of "purpose" we have introduced the very element of mind which the scientific psychologist has sought to eliminate. We have moved away from the purely mechanical and physical view of things to one of implicit teleology. This implies that some-

<sup>1</sup> Hoernlé, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

where in the universe there is mind and thought, though the Behaviourists may deny this.

Only within limits, then, can psychology become scientific, and never to the extent of the purely natural sciences.

In the second place, before further progress can be made, the psychologists must come to some agreement among themselves, for there is at present widespread disagreement regarding many of the basal facts of psychology. Thus most of the Experimentalists would rule out all introspection and disallow all facts that may be gleaned from the direct observation of our own minds. Another school lays great emphasis on introspection, while recognizing the limitations inherent in it.

Hoernlé sums up by saying that "present-day psychology cannot with its whole authority give any single answer to the question What is and What does the Mind?" The result is widespread confusion as to the psychic facts themselves; as to the constitution of states of consciousness and the mental processes. We may mention another source of confusion not dealt with fully by Hoernlé. It is the fact that there is great uncertainty as to the meaning of the terms and the content of the concepts used in psychology. Thus one of the main interests of psychological research in recent days is in the instincts and the instinctive urges at the basis of human nature. But there is widespread disagreement as to the meaning and definition of an "instinct"; as to the number of instincts; their relation to emotion; and the connection of human instincts with those of the sub-human world. Again, in the Psycho-analytic Schools the term that

is central to almost all the discussions—"Libido"—is variously used by Freud, Jung, and Adler. We need not multiply instances. These are sufficient to prove the confused state of psychological thought in general, and the lack of coherence in ideas or co-ordination of methods among the various workers in the field. If psychology is to make its most effective contribution and to avoid the mists and fogs of futile speculation, the psychologists must arrive at some understanding as to the sphere, the methods, the terminology, and the results achieved or established by psychological research.

Some modern psychological theories are a source of peril to the moral life of the individual and society. The cult of self-expression, with its advocacy of the unfettered satisfaction of the instinctive impulses, can issue, and in some cases does issue, in a lowered ethical stringency and lax moral life, more especially in matters of sex.

In religion the peril is greatest at the point of attack on the reality of religious experience. As long as that experience was regarded as real, the religious man, as well as the theologian, had a sheet anchor that held through all the storms of criticism and in the face of every onslaught of materialism and naturalism. But if, as the New Psychology insists, that experience is an illusion, and God Himself but the creation of the projecting tendency of the mind, their sheet anchor is no more. There is no escape from the challenge which modern psychology is thus throwing out to religion and religious thought. We have to face it fairly and honestly. It is not open to us to rule out all the findings of psychology from the realm of religious truth, as the Scholastics

would probably have done, and as some religious folk would do to-day. Nor are we entitled to split the world of truth into several sections regarding one section as revealed truth and another as philosophical or scientific truth. It is too late in the day for us to claim immunity for religious truth from criticism and scientific examination. The Barthian solution which separates the truth which man is able to discover by the use of his natural gifts from the truth revealed by the Spirit of God—separates them so completely that there is no bridge from one to the other—is one that cannot be permanently accepted. All truth is one, and, in the ultimate, it is God's truth, since this is God's world. The truth of psychology—so far as it is real truth and not the fantasies and vagaries of some over-adventurous mind—is as much God's truth as the truth of religion. In a sense all is revealed truth, a self-disclosure of the mind of the Eternal Spirit of the world. There can be no final contradiction or opposition between the ascertained and proven results of psychological research and the assured faith of religion. At any rate, this is the only attitude which we, as Christian thinkers, can take, for we must claim the whole realm of truth for God. Our present task is that of facing up to this challenge. From some points of view it is the most urgent and pressing task of religious thinkers in these days. We must accept all that is assured in the new learning and utilize it to the fuller understanding of God's method of working in and through the mind of man. This need not mean that we are to accept all the theories of the New Psychology without criticism or examination, for we must

“prove all things and hold fast that which is good.”

Two points remain to be emphasized regarding the treatment given to the subject in this volume.

In the bewildering mass of psychological material and the multitude of books, only the leaders or outstanding figures have been dealt with at any length. Most of the books of the leaders have been read, but a great many have been passed over.

Secondly the psychological standpoint adopted in the present volume is that of the older psychology as represented by Stout, Drever, McDougall, Woodworth and others. These, in spite of many differences, keep to the main stream of psychological research and refuse to be drawn aside by any alluring speculation or partial interests, as is the case with some of the recent psychologists. It is from these more conservative and cautious workers that we may expect the best and most fruitful contributions. Whilst keeping thus to the high-way of psychological inquiry, we have, however, not disdained to follow some of the paths traversed by recent speculation, nor have we scrupled to make use of what seem to be the more assured and reasonable theories of these schools, when they help us to a better understanding of our subject. A more complete treatment of some of these theories will be found in an earlier book of mine.<sup>1</sup>

Here, we shall first consider the relation of psychology to religion in general and the various fields in which it may make its contribution (Chapter I). This will be followed by a treatment of the various theories of the origin of Religion (Chapter II), and, as arising from this, we shall deal with the

<sup>1</sup> *The New Psychology and Religious Experience.*

theories of the nature of Religion (Chapter III). After this an effort will be made to deal with the psychological treatment of the rise of Religious Ideas; the Idea of God (Chapter IV); of Worship, (Chapter V); of Sacrifice (Chapter VI); and Immortality (Chapter VII). The chief difficulty in treating of the rise of religious ideas is to find one's way amid the accumulated mass of material, not only in the field of comparative religion, but in the fields of anthropology and ethnology, or even philology. The utmost that can be said here is that we have sought to maintain an independent judgment and to find our own way without altogether ignoring that which other pilgrims in the same region have found for themselves.

purpose is that of understanding the facts of the world through that unifying principle which it posits as the crown of its dialectical process. The steps towards the goal are logical conclusions, and the method that of discursive reasoning from one conclusion to another. The need for an Ultimate Principle is thus forced upon it by the demand for coherence and for the completion of its intellectual edifice.

On the other hand, religion, while it has an intellectual urge, also bears within it a deeper urge; for it involves the whole personality in the quest for satisfaction. Its basal urge is probably feeling, but it lays tribute also on the conative and the cognitive elements of human consciousness. In religion, man's whole being is involved, and the intellectual quest for the articulation of experience is only a part of that whole. More of man's personality (or perhaps we should say his personality at a deeper and fuller range) is implicated in religion than in philosophy. For that reason religion, when it is real and intense, yields to man a satisfaction that philosophy cannot give. In religion his whole nature acquires a harmony and a peace that he finds nowhere else, for he is functioning at his highest and best. In the experience of religion man finds the highest concentration of his powers and the deepest satisfaction of his nature, because his whole being is operative at its highest and intensest. Here then is one point of difference, but this leads to another which is even more important.

Religion takes man one step further on the road in his quest for Reality, and makes assertions about that Reality which philosophy cannot make. If

philosophy makes such assertions, it can do so only because it has taken into account the findings of the religious consciousness. Philosophy cannot go further in its quest than to posit an Absolute, or an Infinite, a First Principle, or Cause, or Ultimate Reality. It goes out of its depth if it seeks to go one step beyond this. It stammers and speaks with no certain sound, as to the nature of that Absolute. David Hume was probably right in insisting that we cannot say anything about the nature or character of God. On purely philosophical grounds he was unassailable. He could only be assailed by taking in the religious implication of the Moral Consciousness of man. This is what the modern idealistic philosophers, such as Pringle Pattison, Sorley, Ward and others have done, when on the basis of their findings in their exploration of the moral law and the fact of moral values, they proceed to argue that the Absolute of philosophy is personal. This conclusion is beyond the range of philosophy as such. It is essentially the religious conclusion, and only by bringing in some aspects of religious experience and consciousness can these philosophers reach it. In religion, however, this is the only conclusion in which man can rest; the only one that satisfies and gives coherence to the facts of religious experience. That experience yields a satisfaction to man in the whole of his personality that can only come through intercourse with another person. So it takes one step further than philosophy and concludes that the Reality or Absolute is such that man can have intercourse with Him on the basis of love and sacrifice; that He claims man and responds to him, and is such that He has preferences and gives Himself to man to

satisfy his need. What is really meant when the religious man speaks of God as personal, is that He is such a One that Spirit with Spirit can meet; that He appeals to man and responds to the appeal of man. Philosophers, as a whole, in forming their views of Reality, have not been prepared to take into consideration the findings of religious experience. When they have done so, they have been led beyond the Infinite, the Absolute, and the Unconditioned, to a Personal Being, who may have supra-personal elements, but who cannot be less than personal, and for the understanding of whose nature the personality of man in its deepest experience is the clearest indication.

Religion cannot and dare not ignore the findings of philosophy. No religion that is opposed to, or irreconcilable with, the highest principles of philosophical thought can long retain its hold on man. On the other hand, philosophy cannot leave out of count the data of the religious consciousness, nor the revelation of the nature and activity of God that comes to men in their religious experience. Too often has religion ignored the findings of philosophical thought to its own detriment and weakness. Such an attitude is fatal to religion itself.

Many modern philosophers go to the other extreme, seeking to bring out the antagonisms of philosophy and religion; to exalt the conclusions of philosophy above those of religious experience. Both attitudes are wrong, for the real relation is that of mutual dependence in the task of discovering truth. They should go hand in hand to the goal, each recognizing the limitations of the other and contributing to its strength.

Now psychology as one of the branches of philosophy comes thus to share in the relation in which philosophy stands to religion. But it has a closer relation than the other branches of philosophy inasmuch as its subject matter is experience, or mental states as these are experienced. There are other branches of philosophy that have a close relation to religion, such as ethics, and æsthetics. All these belong to the realm of values, for religion is a value, indeed the supreme value, the highest and most real, or the basic value. Psychology, however, deals with the facts of experience, and as religion is itself an experience of man's spirit in relation to God, it has to deal with certain aspects of religion. It does not deal with all aspects of religion. Thus the beliefs or doctrines of religion are not matters of psychological concern, except in so far as they may be the product of experience, or may influence the form or content of the experience itself. Further, the rites and ceremonies of religion are not direct subjects of psychological study. But they come under the purview of psychology in an indirect way, since they may induce religious experience and influence the religious consciousness. On the other hand, psychology must examine into the nature of religion itself, since it is in essence an experience; or a relation between man and "another," which issues in an experience, having distinct characteristics of its own. It can legitimately ask what is the essential psychic or spiritual element in that relation and what is the specific factor in religious experience that makes it different from other aspects of human experience. It can study the relation of this definite religious consciousness to the other aspects of

conscious life, more especially those moving in the realm of values.

It will be well then to emphasize again the fact that psychology can only deal with religion as experienced, for its field is mental and psychic states as these are experienced. Here, however, we encounter the fact that certain schools of psychology deny that there are mental and psychic facts as such. The Behaviourists, of whom Watson is the leader, rule out all mental facts and reduce them to physiological processes of the brain.

It will be evident that such a position makes it difficult to understand how there is such a fact as religion at all. We find therefore that in most of the Behaviourists the religious interest is very meagre, although in the case of Professor Leuba, who is from one point of view to be classed as a Behaviourist, there is a very decided interest in religion, and some of his best psychological work has been done in the field of religion, although we cannot agree with his treatment of the subject.

From another point of view the Psycho-analytic School in the dominant section represented by Freud and his disciples takes little interest in religion. In their case this does not come from the denial of mental facts, for this school deals mainly with the "psychic," and Freud definitely dissociates himself from the physiological treatment of the subject. He has the crowning virtue of treating psychology as a purely psychic and spiritual discipline, and of relegating the material and physiological to their legitimate places in the study. We should, therefore, expect him to give some place to religion, inasmuch as it is one of the dominant psychic interests of

man. But Freud treats religion with a studied indifference. He rarely refers to it and in his dealings with his patients, he seems consistently to avoid bringing in religion. He does touch on questions bearing on the origin of religion in his *Totem and Taboo*, but this is only incidental to his main purpose of proving that the primal taboo is connected with sex, and that the "Totem" is itself a sacrifice for the murdered father who has been slain by the sons at the urge of the Oedipus Complex.<sup>1</sup>

Jung, the leader of the Zürich School, on the contrary, makes great use of religion, both in his treatment of his patients and in the exposition of his system. His works are full of references to religion, some of them very acute, revealing a deep and real insight into the meaning of religion and its place in life.

Looking at the subject more closely, we note that there are three points of intimate contact between psychology and religion.

1. Psychology has its contribution to make to the study of the origin of religion. It is generally conceded that there are two lines of approach to the problem of discovering the origin of religion, the historical and the psychological. Along the historical line of research men seek to trace religion back from its more developed forms to its primitive beginnings; to discover how religion first arose; when it first made its appearance; what were the forces that gave it birth; what were the stages of its

<sup>1</sup> In his latest book entitled *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, he treats of Religion (Lecture 35), but he only makes clear and definite the vague suggestions of his earlier works. He adds nothing of importance.

development from the lowest and most primitive religion up to the highest form in Monotheism; and how this development is connected with the other facts of social, political, cultural, and ethical life. This is the line of study that issues in the Science of Comparative Religion. Along this line results of very great value have been reached.<sup>1</sup>

But even greater results have been achieved along the psychological line. This seeks to trace the motives and feelings, the needs and desires that give rise to religion. It examines the consciousness and experience of primitive peoples and the consciousness of children for the psychological states that give rise to religious emotion and prompt to religious acts and modes of expression. It endeavours to discover how religion arises in human nature, being born in the individual's struggle with the forces of the world around him as a part of his struggle for self-preservation and of his effort to find a *modus vivendi* for himself amid the hostile forces of his environment. This line of approach undoubtedly brings us nearer the original fount of religion than the historical, for the psychic factors in experience persist amid constant change. Moreover the element of feeling which seems to be basal in the religious consciousness is the most conservative of all the psychic elements.

It must be said, however, that although most valuable data have been reached along this line, psychology does not and cannot bring us to the

<sup>1</sup> The distinction between the historical and psychological lines of approach cannot be pressed too strongly, for those who follow the historical line make great use of psychological data, and those who follow the other line depend largely on the finding of students in the historical field.

actual beginning of religion in the soul. It may bring us nearer to that beginning than any other discipline, but the actual beginning is beyond its ken. There are several reasons for this limitation.

In the first place, we cannot really know the primitive mind, for it is a well-known fact that "the primitive man" of anthropological and ethnological study is a fiction. Primitive men and savage tribes, as we know them to-day, may be far removed from the really primitive state, for there must have been some development. Nor must we ignore the possibilities of degeneration. Some acknowledged scholars hold that many of the so-called primitive men of anthropological research are really degenerate types of an earlier culture. Great caution has to be exercised here.

In the examination of the child mind again, there is the difficulty of thinking oneself back to the child's point of view. It is not easy to give a psychological account of the mental state of another person. This difficulty is increased in proportion to the differences of age, culture, and environment between the psychologist and the subject of his study. This is a weakness that attends all psychological research and it tells very heavily in the psychological approach to the problem of the origin of religion.<sup>1</sup>

In the second place, it is a well-known fact in psychology that the expression of any emotion or state of consciousness is not the same as the state which it seeks to express. In the very act of finding expression the state of consciousness has changed and with it the relative combinations or integrations

<sup>1</sup> For the limitations of the scientific approach to truth in general see Professor B. Lee Woolf's Essay in *God and the Universe* (edited by J. Lewis, May 1931), pp. 159 ff.

within the whole of consciousness. In being expressed, the very state that gave rise to the expression has passed into another. It may be said, therefore, that the expression given to religious experience is never the same as the experience itself. Religion is in essence an experience of the spirit of man, an aspect of life lived through in the intimacies of the self, and into that life all the elements of consciousness enter. Thought, volition, feeling, all have a place in it. But when man seeks to give expression to that experience, be that expression in words, or acts, in rites, or symbols, in whatsoever form the expression may be made, it is never the same as the experience itself; it can never fully and adequately reveal all that is in the experience. Not even in introspection is this possible, for in turning inward to examine our own states, the very states we wish to examine have passed into others. The best we can do is to catch sidelong glances at our real states.<sup>1</sup> Psychology then has to deal with the expressed states and to interpret these in the light of the principles which it regards as established. In other words, it has always to deal with the secondary and not the primary elements in experience, always with data that are one stage removed from the fact or state of consciousness in the experience. So it has to deal with the experience of religion in the consciousness of man as this finds some expression. This means that it does not get at the real state or experience, that is, it fails to reach the real beginning of religion.

2. Psychology may legitimately examine the

<sup>1</sup> It is not here implied that Introspection cannot give us any knowledge of our mental states. Only an experimentalist would hold that view.

religious consciousness. It may seek to discover the content of that consciousness; to consider what are the instinctive bases and impulses from which it develops. It may ask whether there is a separate religious instinct, and if so, wherein it differs, if at all, from the primary instincts of man's being. If there is ground for believing that there is no such instinct, what is implied in the distinctive religious attitude? It may then proceed to inquire what is the basal element in the religious consciousness. Is it feeling, volition, or reason? From this it may proceed to consider what is the relation of this consciousness to the other aspects of conscious life as represented by the moral, the æsthetic, and the rational consciousness. It may then push its inquiries further back and examine what is meant by the self or by personality as the bearer or integration of consciousness. Some of these questions are more primary and basal than others, and probably here the most important, as well as the deepest problem, is that of the relation of the religious consciousness to the moral consciousness. This has become prominent through the influence of the teaching of certain philosophers, such as the late Professor Pringle Pattison, and theologians like Professor John Baillie who, following Kant, seek to base religion on morality and regard the moral consciousness as the foundation on which the religious consciousness rests, a position which we cannot accept. It would be truer to say that the religious consciousness is the basic fact, on the ground of which the moral, the æsthetic and the rational consciousness develop as differentiations within the whole. It will be seen that in thus treating of the religious

consciousness psychology is moving on the borderland of metaphysics. This, however, is inevitable in dealing with such subjects as consciousness, personality, and the self.

3. Psychology again is concerned with religious experience, and it can and does throw valuable light on such facts as the consciousness of sin, conversion, the peace of forgiveness, the power that comes into life in religion, prayer, and the sense of an Unseen Presence, which culminates in Mysticism. Here psychology has an important contribution to make to the understanding of such experiences. More especially is this so with what may be called the New Psychology, for such facts as Sublimation, Suggestion, Transference, Ambivalence, and, from another point of view, Regression, open to us new possibilities for the clearer comprehension of some of the deepest experiences of man in his religious life.

We have hitherto been considering the points of contact between psychology and religion as an experience or a state of consciousness through which the religious man lives. This, however, even when we take the three aspects mentioned, does not exhaust the bearing of psychology on religion. We may possibly regard these three aspects as a complete statement of the points of direct contact, but there are others of an indirect character with which psychology has to deal. Thus psychology is not specifically concerned with the rites and ceremonies of religion, as such, but it may legitimately consider the influence of these on the mind, the emotions, and the will of the believer. Such a fact, again, as the Liturgy of Worship, may be studied in its effects on those who take part in it.

The same may be said of the constant repetition of the Creed and the Paternoster. Moreover, the Eucharistic Service, more especially as this comes to its crown in the Roman Catholic Service of the Mass, may become the subject of deep psychological study, for such services are charged with elements of suggestion that may influence those who partake in them very profoundly. Practically all the details of worship may thus become subjects of psychological consideration. Further, the effect of lights, colours, incense, and processions, may come into the field of psychology, as well as the influence of the decoration and architectural features of the buildings used for worship. Nor can the character and numbers of the congregations be ignored, for such facts as physical contiguity and the atmosphere of personal contact have to be taken into account. There are also such facts as the influence of the crowd and of concerted action by the crowd. These factors come legitimately into the field of crowd psychology, and here the operation of the Herd Instinct may be studied. Such elements in the situation as the increased suggestibility of men when in a crowd and the tendency of excessive emotion to override the reason, so that the inhibitory controls are relaxed, the crowd being carried into abnormalities of conduct and even into serious excesses, are all open to psychological examination. In this field of crowd psychology, we have such phenomena as religious revivals with their appeal to the emotions, and what is regarded by many psychologists as a reversion to a lower and more primitive level of life. Here too such facts as suggestion made through hymn singing and the constant repetition of familiar texts may be studied,

together with the deeper question of the effect of the emotional excitement of such gatherings on conversion and the experiences that accompany and follow conversion.

Again, psychology may legitimately examine abnormal states of religious experience, such as religious mania, and the aberration of some instincts such as the sex instinct, in certain religious activities. Such phenomena as the gift of tongues, and the physical exertions in connection with religion, as seen in the shakers and the dancing dervishes, have also to be taken into account, if a complete and comprehensive psychology of religion is to be written. In this book, however, such facts will only be dealt with incidentally, for we shall seek to keep to the main track of the bearing of psychology on the central and determinative elements of the religious consciousness and experience, possibly reserving for a later time the consideration of such subsidiary elements as those enumerated in this section.

Apart from these theories of the New Psychology, we must point out two elements of weakness in all psychological treatment of religious experience. In the first place, the analysis and examination of that experience takes something out of the experience itself and makes it different. To subject it to psychological analysis is to rob it of some essential elements. This makes it difficult to form an accurate judgment regarding it.

In the second place, the study of Psychology from the purely scientific point of view seems to take away some element from the psychologists and leaves them incapable of forming an unbiassed judgment

with regard to religion. Their excessive absorption in purely scientific study seems to bring about the atrophy of the emotional element in human nature, rendering them unfitted for passing judgment on religious experience. Many psychologists appear to have little or no religious experience and often no belief in religion. Under such conditions they are certainly not the safest guides in matters of religious experience. For this reason many of their theories are contrary to the facts of experience as known to those who are really religious. It cannot, then, be too often stated that a knowledge of the psychology of religion does not make a man religious, nor does an understanding of the psychological factors in religious experience bring to man the experience itself. Moreover, men may be and are religious, sharing in the profoundest and most real religious experiences, who have no knowledge of the psychology of such experience. We cannot, in view of these facts, identify a knowledge of the psychological factors in religion with religion itself. This makes it clear that if the psychologist is to be able to give the real inwardness of the experiences which he analyses he must share in these experiences. In other words, he must be a religious man. It will be evident also that it is necessary for psychology to proceed cautiously in its treatment of the facts of religion. This is especially so in relation to the New Psychology in both its branches of Behaviourism and Psycho-analysis. These schools raise many more questions than they solve, and many of the solutions offered by them cannot be accepted, since they are opposed to the deeper experience of men in their religious life.

## CHAPTER II

# PSYCHOLOGY AND THE ORIGIN OF RELIGION

WE have already seen that there are two lines of research into the origin of religion, and that the psychological approach brings us closer to its beginnings, although it cannot take us every step of the way. This disability on the part of psychology is one which it shares with all science, for science is not able in any sphere to get back to real beginnings. Its field is limited to that which is given as actual fact, and its task is descriptive. It has to assume a beginning which it cannot prove or describe. In spite of this limitation, however, psychology yields valuable data in the quest of the origin of religion. These point the way to a view of the actual beginning that may prove satisfactory in the interest of higher religious truth. Professor Galloway was keenly alive to the limitations of psychology in this field, and expressed some doubt as to the legitimacy of its application to these questions. This was also largely the position of Höffding. Marett is undoubtedly right in insisting that the function of a psychological treatment of religion is to determine, as far as possible, its history, but not its truth. (*Threshold of Religion*. Preface p. 14.) The importance of the psychological approach to the question of religion, however, may be seen from the fact that anthropologists and those students of the Science of Comparative Religion, who have been foremost in seeking for the historical origin of religion have all made

use of psychological data. Marett readily admits this fact when he says: (*Threshold of Religion*, p. 122) "British anthropologists (except Spencer) have always applied psychological methods to the comparative study of religion." He states further that there is little chance of understanding the religious consciousness and experience except from inside. Ritual acts and forms are but outward signs of an inward spiritual condition. The student must seek to penetrate beyond these outward signs to the "subjective factors of which the objective manifestation form the more or less loose fitting garments." To reach these subjective factors the application of psychological methods is imperative.

Among the theologians, Pfleiderer and Sabatier have been prominent advocates of the psychological method, the former regarding it as a basal principle that "the theory of the origin of religion which has the greatest degree of psychological probability, and which at the same time explains in the most natural way the facts of primitive history, will come nearest a solution." The theologians on the whole, however, have not looked kindly on this psychological approach. The theories propounded from the side of psychology on such questions as the origin, the nature, and the value of religion cannot be ignored without impoverishing our religious life and stultifying much of our religious truth.

There is one broad general principle observable in the treatment of this subject by all those who approach it from the purely psychological point of view. This principle will be illustrated in our subsequent pages, but it may be stated here briefly as the effort to explain the origin of religion naturally,

without any reference to any supernatural source or the operation of anything in the nature of revelation; to regard it as from below rather than from above. Thouless says<sup>1</sup> that "most psychologists interest themselves in trying to show, either that all the phenomena of religious experience can be explained without any religious assumptions, or that they do not point to any agency outside the individual experiencing them." Many of those who approach the question from a theological standpoint have been led to abandon the theory that religion originates in a primitive revelation of divine truth. Such writers as Pfeiderer, Garvie, Galloway and others have seen that, in the form in which the theory was usually held, it is no longer tenable since the understanding of any truth depends on the capacity of the person who seeks to understand. It is too much to expect primitive man to possess a mental capacity that could enable him to understand the meaning and implication of divine truth, or to grasp an exalted monotheistic faith, such as is implied in the orthodox theory of a primitive revelation. Yet it may be held with a fair measure of reason that there was a primitive revelation within the nature of man himself. Pfeiderer insists strongly on the fact that there is some truth in the idea of a primitive revelation, inasmuch as the self-consciousness of man has an element of God-consciousness within it, as part of the constitution of his being, and this declares its community of essence with the divine consciousness. So it might be argued that the reason of man and his capacity for thought, will, and feeling, however developed these may be in primitive man, bear

<sup>1</sup> *An Introduction to the Psychology of Religion*, chapter I, pp. 6-7.

an imprint of the divine and have a kinship with the Eternal Mind. In this way God has made a revelation of Himself in the very stuff and fibre of human consciousness, and man may get to know something of Him by an exploration of the deep places of his own being. This position makes it possible for Pfeiderer to say (*Philosophy of Religion*, Section I, Chapter I) "that the beginning of religion is to be sought . . . in a mood of the human consciousness which, though naïve, yet contains the essence of these feelings which go to make up the piety of the more developed God-consciousness. The kernel of all religion is the reference of man's life to the world governing power which seeks to grow into a living union with it, and this is actually present in germ in the lowest stage of the mythological consciousness."

Now it is precisely this divine origin, either as a historical fact, or as an element in the constitution of man, which the psychologists deny, for they almost all seek to explain its rise by natural means as a part of the evolution of man's experience and life. In this matter many of the anthropologists agree.

Whilst the psychologists maintain their interest in the subjective side of religion and its origin, they join hands with the anthropologists in assuming that religion springs naturally from the circumstances in which man finds himself as part of the struggle to find a *modus vivendi* in his environment, without any reference to a divine source or a divine impartation. This, for instance, is the position of Leuba when he makes religion a mere matter of behaviour that arises as naturally and spontaneously as any other kind of behaviour among animals and men. He says "The place of religion is due, not to the

quality in it, but to circumstances."<sup>1</sup> We need not quarrel with the view that makes religion spring naturally from man's reaction to his environment, providing we hold on to the idea that the capacity for this must have been prior to its operation. The seed grows quite naturally, reacting spontaneously to the environment when it finds itself embedded in the soil. It exercises a fine, subtle discrimination and selectiveness in choosing those very qualities in the soil that subserve its life and growth. But it does this because it has in itself an element of life that bears within it this very power of selecting and utilizing the proper forces, while refusing all others, a capacity inherent in the very fact of its life. So we might argue that religion arises naturally when it finds the right kind of environment, and makes its selection of those elements within it that subserve its life, but that this implies a prior spark of life with the capacity for this selectiveness. Given these, there is no doubt that religion will and does arise quite naturally. In this sense we may say that religion is natural to man; that naturally and spontaneously he tends to give a religious interpretation to the experiences of life. But the conditions of this are not to be found in his environment merely. They are to be found in himself and in his responses to the environment. They are part of his nature and being and they help to make him "incurably religious." This is why he is to be found with religious elements in his life even at the very lowest stage of mental and social life, as is proved beyond doubt by anthropological research.

<sup>1</sup>*The Psychological Origin and Nature of Religion*, chapter V, pp. 80-86.

The "Consensus Gentium" argument is not a convincing or cogent one, but it at least suggests that human nature has an inherent disposition or capacity for religion, and that this capacity is stirred into activity whenever and wherever the fitting kind of environmental conditions are found. It is not his environment, then, that makes man religious. It is rather his religious nature that gives a religious interpretation and colour to his environment, utilizing it in the service of his deepest life. We join issue with the Psychologists only at the point where they deny this religious element in man. It should be stated, however, that all psychologists do not take this position, for Professors Lloyd Morgan, Drever, Bartlett, Stout, Pratt and others readily admit the religious element in the consciousness of man even at its very lowest.

We may group the various theories of the origin of religion under two main heads thus :

(A) Those basing religion on the instincts and regarding it as springing from one or other of the basal instincts. Here we find three main classes according as it is thought to spring from (i) the Sex ; (ii) the Herd ; or (iii) the Self-preserving instinct.

(B) Those regarding it as originating in a distinctive element in the constitution of man. Here again we find several different views, for (i) some hold that it originates in the reason ; (ii) others in the moral consciousness ; (iii) and others in a special religious organ or faculty. We shall deal with each of these theories.

## A

## RELIGION AS ORIGINATING IN SOME INSTINCT

(I) *The Sexual Instinct*

The prevailing view among those who belong to the Psycho-analytic School is that religion springs from and is based upon the Instinct of Sex. Leuba, although in other respects he has affinities with the Behaviourists, agrees with this view in general asserting that the enthusiasm of the devotee and the ecstasy of the mystic are in essence the sublimations of the sex emotion. We shall consider the Psychoanalysts first.

Freud in his work entitled *Totem and Taboo*, comes to the conclusion that totemism is the original form of religion; and totemism itself arises, in the final issue, from what he calls "a dislocation in the family life of the primitive horde," due to the urge of sex.<sup>1</sup> The sons in the horde, driven by the sex instinct, slay their father in order to obtain possession of the women folk. When this deed was done, some tender feeling towards the murdered father that had been present in their hearts made itself felt, and this led to several results. First they felt that they could not take the women who had belonged to their father for the possession of whom they had slain him. In this way the incest barrier first appeared. Then, again, they were led by something like the pangs of conscience to make a sacrifice of expiation and commemoration. Here we have the origin of the totem feast and with it the worship of the animals which were considered sacred for this feast. When we

<sup>1</sup> He takes the same position in his later books.

reach the totem stage we are at the beginning of religion.

It comes thus through the urge of sex. Not only so, but the dominant ideas of religion in its subsequent development—such ideas as those of the Creator, the Moral Governor, and the Great Father—arise as projections of the mind urged by the same instinct. Freud goes even further than this, saying that the sublimest religious experiences, as well as art, society, and ethics are based on the primary sexual complex which he calls the "Oedipus Complex." Jung, although he differs from Freud in refusing to give the first place to the instinct of sex, as well as from his conclusion that religion first appears as totemism, yet in the ultimate derives religion from the sex instinct. He regards it as due to a regression to the Father Image of childhood days. But as this regression is itself based largely on the sexual urge, he concludes that religion springs from and is based upon the Libido.

The Freudian School undoubtedly lays too much stress on the instinct of sex, and among the followers of Freud there has been a reaction away from the extreme view of the founder. Even Freud's son claims that to have made this instinct central, as most of his interpreters and critics have done, is really to misinterpret Freud. If, however, we are to judge from Freud's published works, especially from his most recent work, the sex instinct is regarded as basal; so much so that he tends to make it the supreme power of motivation in life. It is on this ground that he derives religion from it.

Among the reasons given by the advocates of this view for the position they take are the following:

(a) There is first the well-authenticated fact, derived from our knowledge of the great religions, especially primitive religions, that there are sexual elements found in many of the ancient religions. This receives a certain amount of corroboration from the fact that there seems to be some kinship or possible reaction between the religious emotion and the sex emotion, as may be proved from the after effects of religious revivals.

(b) The beginning of conscious and deliberate religious life in the individual is often traced to the period of puberty and adolescence, as is evident from the fact that conversion is so frequently an adolescent phenomenon.

(c) Very much is made of the fact that the mystics in their highest and most sublime experiences of religion give expression to their emotions in erotic language, using terms suggestive of the sex life. On the basis of this fact Leuba works out the theory that all such mystical experiences are due to the repression of the sex instinct.

With regard to these points, it has to be admitted that there are sexual elements in many ancient religions, but it is possible to argue that these are perversions of elements that are nobler and more spiritual in their nature. The religious desire for union with God, which bears within it the possibilities of the highest spiritual communion, has been perverted in many ways. Thus we have in many religions the idea of eating the God as a means of obtaining union with Him through assimilation by the believer. Many of their religious feasts are based on this idea, and, as is well known, it was one of the chief motives in the ritual of the Mystery Religions which existed

in the Roman Empire during the early spread of the Christian Faith. Another possible mode of union was that of the sex relation and there is little doubt that many of the practices arose in this way. It may be noted further that another noble religious idea, that of rendering the most coveted and valued possession to the gods, may be perverted in much the same way. Moreover, it can be proved that religion existed before these practices are found. It is scarcely sufficient, then, to point to their existence in some religions as a proof that all religion springs from the sex element in man.

Again the fact that conversion is so frequently an adolescent phenomenon can scarcely be regarded as sufficient proof, for there are other factors to be taken into account. It is not safe to regard adolescence as mainly the period of the awakening and development of the sex impulse. This is undoubtedly one element in it, but it is in reality the awakening of the whole personality to a realization of its selfhood and its power in life. Mental life and moral consciousness come to a fuller place in and control over life, and as part of this general awakening, there is a stronger consciousness of sex and its claims. Further, it is not definitely proved that conversion is so predominantly an adolescent experience. It may be so in those lands where Christian influence has told most heavily in the life and thought of men. This is clear from the statistics furnished by Starbuck and other workers in this field. But it does not appear to be so in those lands in which Christian influence has not been felt. In mission lands conversion<sup>1</sup> seems to take place

<sup>1</sup> This applies, not only to conversions to Christianity, but to all conversions, although less frequently to non-Christian conversions.

much later in life. This seems to suggest that the deciding factor is not so much the adolescent change on its physical and instinctive sides, as the environmental and traditional influences. To these objections others may be added. Professors William James and Stanley Hall have emphasized the fact that sex love and religious love lead to different activities and produce different results in life and experience. This would be inexplicable if they were the same and grew out of the same root. Further, if religion in man springs from the instinct of sex we should expect religion to vary in the individual as the sex instinct varies. It would be legitimate to expect religion to be strong and dominant in the early period of manhood and to grow weaker as the sex impulse wanes and disillusionment comes. The contrary, however, is the fact, for religion when it is real in the individual grows stronger and more sustaining as old age comes on. Its spiritual reality becomes more evident as the fires of passion die.<sup>1</sup> In view of all these facts we feel constrained to reject this theory of the origin of religion.

### (II) *The Herd Instinct*

The view that religion originates in the Herd Instinct is basal to the position of the French

<sup>1</sup> We may quote one instance of this. Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Haldane at the age of 99 is quoted as saying: "As old age advances the certainty of God's presence and willingness to commune with me grows stronger and somehow ever more real, as if there were but a step between time and eternity. I cannot altogether account for it, but it grows stronger and stronger as age advances."

Quoted by the Archbishop of York in his Introduction to her Life, by her daughter. Hodder and Stoughton, 1923.

The Archbishop adds: "Strange," she said to me one day, "is it not? that it has come to me after 95 years of life to begin to realize the real meaning of the words, 'The gift of the Spirit is joy.'"

School of Social Science and Psychology as represented by Durkheim and Lévy-Bruhl. In some aspects of his thought Tansley also takes the same view, for he insists that religion all through is a herd affair and that the object of man's worship is a projection of those qualities which the herd seeks for in a leader, so that God becomes for him the supreme herd hero or leader. Wundt, also, in his *Folk Psychology* seems to accept a similar view, for he regards religion as beginning, and the idea of gods as appearing, through the fusion of the clan hero with the animistic spirits of primitive thought. It would probably be correct to class Trotter with these for he gives a qualified support to this position. In America Professor E. S. Ames in his *Psychology of Religious Experience* works out the same thesis, although from a somewhat different standpoint. He begins with a conception of religion as "the highest social values" and enunciates the view that it is wholly a social product, its essential nature being social righteousness. The French School regards religion as one of the "collective representations" of primitive society in its earliest form of thinking. The members of this school believe that, in addition to the individual consciousness, there is a collective consciousness, a social mind, born of the co-operation of the various individuals of the group. This collective consciousness has its own distinctive laws and method of thinking. Lévy-Bruhl enunciates the theory that the primitive mind thinks according to different laws from those observed by educated men. Modern educated men make great use of the principle of contradiction in their thinking, whereas primitive man employed what may be described as

"the principle of participation," or to express it differently, primitive man thought synthetically without previous analysis. To early man, then, all things were connected by subtle bonds and strange affinities; his concepts and the current coin of his thinking were "collective representations" in which all things seemed to fuse. From this source he gets all the forms of time and space, the categories of cause and substance as these held in the pre-logical stage of thinking. The "collective representations" were thought in some way to have a religious or mystical origin and to be devoid of logical laws or principles. There is thus a gulf between the pre-logical and the logical types of thinking.

Durkheim insists strongly on the religious background of early thought maintaining that religion is a permanent feature of man's life. He believes, however, that it is rooted in, and springs from, the group consciousness, or the social mind, in such a way that the real object of veneration is Society. The primitive group has all the qualities which are needed to arouse the sensation or feeling of the "divine" or "sacred"; it becomes to all its members what God is to the worshipper. It exercises authority over its members in every aspect of their lives, an authority which bears similar sanctions to those wielded by the Gods. It demands implicit obedience; punishes those who disobey; and becomes a determiner of destiny to all in the group. In this way it produces morality; inspires progress; and becomes a power that lifts man above himself. Religion is thus, to Durkheim nothing but "a system of ideas with which the individuals represent to themselves the society of which they

are members and the relations they have with it." He cannot say definitely how religion originates, though he inclines to regard Totemism as the original form. He states however, "that all religious phenomena are those which consist of obligatory beliefs connected with definite practices in relation to the object given in these beliefs." There is an element of truth in Durkheim's position in so far as he insists that religion is a social fact that exercises a profound influence of life as a whole. The position, however, is open to criticism on three main grounds.

In the first place, it is doubtful whether primitive man exercised his mind at all about beliefs, for his religion was primarily an experience. Only later, when society had developed and custom had become supreme, did obligatory practices and beliefs grow into importance. Many scholars maintain that primitive religion had no doctrine or established beliefs. The worshipper was left free to give any explanation that might occur to him of the experience he shared in religion. We shall have to consider this question more fully when we treat of the rise of religious ideas; but we may point out here that Professor Clement Webb agrees that in primitive society it was practice that mattered, not theories or beliefs.

In the second place, we must insist that, although Religion has a social aspect, it is primarily a personal and individual matter. There must be private religious experiences before any attempt is made to interpret religion, and some form of interpretation is imperative before religion can become a social fact. Webb has pointed out that these experiences put men in touch with a reality deeper and more impressive

than the social beliefs or "collective representations" of the group mind. They are genuine apprehensions of a Reality greater than the world can give.

Finally it is very doubtful whether primitive man did or could think by different principles and laws from those of civilized man. There must have been differences, but those were due to the undeveloped state of mind rather than to different principles. Webb points out<sup>1</sup> in opposition to this view that the mind of man at every stage of its development has an impulse continually at work producing attempts at both analysis and synthesis, and that the primitive mind should be treated as "infantile" rather than "pre-logical." Moreover he insists that the distinction between the mystical and the practical is drawn both by primitive and by civilized man and that these distinctions rest on real differences within the experience of man. He concludes that the view that primitive man thinks by different principles from civilized man cannot be sustained, and that the so-called law of participation is, in the final issue, a chimera.<sup>2</sup> Wundt, after a careful and elaborate study of the psychology of primitive peoples, arrives at a conclusion that is in all essentials identical with that of Webb. Further, Professor F. C. Bartlett agrees that the idea that primitives think differently from civilized men cannot be established. We may, however, accept the position that religion becomes at a later stage a strong social factor, developing into a clan or tribal affair. It retains

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, chapter VI.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. "The 'primitive mentality,' about which Lévy-Bruhl . . . has written so much . . . is in fact nothing but a philosophical abstraction without counterpart in reality." Rafael Karstan, *The Origins of Religion*, 1935, p. 22.

this character in the higher phases of its development, for in many instances it becomes a racial or national institution, even a state organization. Only with difficulty does it transcend this racial or national aspect. But to admit this is not to agree with the theory which regards religion as originating in the "collective representations" of the primitive group.

### III. *The Instinct of Self-Preservation.*

We are probably right in regarding the view which finds the origin of religion in the instinct of self-preservation as the prevailing one among psychologists, apart from the more recent schools. This is undoubtedly the most firmly established and fruitful contribution of psychology to the study of this question.

We shall only deal with some of the outstanding representatives.

Höffding endeavours to make religion spring from the life force itself. He insists that religion as an individual experience cannot be made or constituted by any force outside man; it "grows out of life itself and springs from the basal mood of man in his struggle for life."<sup>1</sup> It is thus a part of man's struggle for self-preservation in a world of hostile and destructive forces, an effort to hold fast and secure that which he has been taught by experience to regard as possessing the highest value. Its root lies in the resolution not to let these values be lost or destroyed in the struggle which life itself impels him to make. In this way Höffding reaches the conception of religion as "the conservation of

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophy of Religion*, Part III, Section D, p. 215 f.

values," or "the faith that in the struggle the highest and essential values cannot be lost."

Hocking takes very much the same position. He regards religion as springing, not from any subsidiary instinct, such as curiosity, but from the deep-lying instinct at the basis of life, as deep as the will to live and as basal as the urge of life itself. McDougall thinks he finds the beginning of religion in the complex emotion of awe and reverence. But he insists that the primary elements in this complex emotion are fear and curiosity. Now fear, according to McDougall, is the emotional reaction of the instinct of self-preservation. So we may conclude that, in the ultimate, religion springs from this central urge of life towards preservation and fuller life. Fear is stirred by the terrible and awe-inspiring powers of the world, but mingled with this is a more kindly element evoked by the gracious and beneficent aspects of nature which inspire gratitude and respect. He believes that from the very earliest times primitive religion kept these two classes separate. This position is interesting in view of the fact that most anthropologists as well as psychologists regard fear as the dominant emotion in the origin of religion. It is, however, a position that has grave difficulties, for it is certain that the primitive religious emotion must have been complex. It may be true that the prevailing element in that complex whole was fear, as may be inferred from the fact of the prevalence of evil spirits and demons in primitive religious beliefs, and that many rites and ceremonies are practised as a means of warding off or placating these malignant forces. It is a well-attested fact that the events and happenings which

compel attention and so initiate speculation are the terrifying, the catastrophic and the unusual. Some modification of this position may be necessary in connection with the study of the child mind. We are safe in inferring that to primitive man there would be, besides the terrifying forces of nature, such as thunder and lightning, torrent and flood, such facts as the warmth of the sun, the genial and beneficent light of the moon, as well as the more gracious aspects of nature and her forces. Along with fear of the spirits of the dead, again, there would be memories of kindnesses received and something like affection responding to affection. These would not wholly pass away. We may therefore believe with Marett that in the pre-animistic stage of religion which he regards as the rudimentary and protoplasmic type of religious experience, there are, in addition to fear, the elements of wonder, admiration, interest, respect and perhaps even love.<sup>1</sup> Bartlett

<sup>1</sup> *Threshold of Religion*, Chapter I, p. 13. Marett's theory of a pre-animistic stage, which he designates "animatism," has not been accepted by all scholars. It is strongly supported by K. T. Preuss (*Glaube und Mystik in Schatten des höchsten Wesens*, 1926), but as strongly opposed by Professor Rafael Karstan (*The Origins of Religion*, 1935). The latter shows that many of the instances given by Marett are better and more fully explained by the hypothesis of Animism, most of them being cases of Animism pure and simple (p. 316). In other instances he believes that Marett has accepted secondary evidence that is not reliable. Further he argues on the lines of Wundt that the pre-animistic theory involves the position that primitive thinking is from the abstract to the concrete, whereas the reverse is true. Karstan thinks it very difficult to refute this objection of Wundt. The difficulty regarding the idea of a pre-animistic stage lies in its connection with magic and the conception of impersonal powers as preceding belief in personal powers. It certainly is difficult to accept this view, for the tendency is to attribute life and personal powers to things and not vice versa. If however the pre-animistic stage is regarded as is done in this work, as a vague sense of personal powers—animism being the stage of fuller and more definite personality in the powers—there can be no serious objection to the theory, and there is much to commend it. There is, however, in recent days, a distinct swing back in the direction of Animism, as the ground and original form of religion, but Soderblom accepts a pre-animistic stage.

agrees that, although fear is the most prominent element, there is more than fear in the primitive religious emotion and reaction.<sup>1</sup> Leuba<sup>2</sup>, although he accepts fear as basal, yet regards it as only one of the constituent elements in the religious experience, holding that it must not be taken as excluding other elements such as wonder and tender emotion. Even the possibility of love must not be rejected.

We may class under this heading those theories which regard religion as based, not merely on the instinct of self-preservation on the biological level, but on that instinct as containing within itself an impulse towards the attainment of fuller and progressively nobler life.

Professor Whitehead maintains that there is a threefold urge within the mind and that its impact on its environment follows three lines in that it seeks, (a) to live; (b) to live well; and (c) to live better<sup>3</sup>, and he would find the root of all religion in this urge. Professor Miall Edwards,<sup>4</sup> in his treatment of the Psychological origin and Development of religion, adopts the position of Functional Psychology, or, as he calls it "a psychology of personal self-realization rather than that of mental mechanism." He agrees that religion came to birth "amidst the consciousness of mysterious powers supposed to be vitally affecting human life, in such a conception as that of Mana." But he then proceeds to ask why this leads to religious behaviour. He replies that it does so because primitive man felt that in Mana there was power available for his use

<sup>1</sup> *Psychology and Folklore*, chapter I.

<sup>2</sup> *The Psychological Origin and Nature of Religion*, chapter V, pp 80 f.

<sup>3</sup> *The Function of Reason*, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> *The Philosophy of Religion*, chapter III, pp. 63 f.

in the struggle for existence. He insists that the basal impulse in the will to live has two aspects, a negative aspect which becomes operative in warding off the forces of destruction and death, and a positive aspect revealing itself in the "will to life's joy and fulness of power." Religion is thus rooted in biological necessities, in the basal urge for life. With regard to this position, we may insist that the mere struggle for physical life is not necessarily religious. If we regard religion as originating and surviving because it subserves merely the biological end in this physical sense, then the position is one with which we cannot agree. Professor Edwards safeguards himself by insisting that the religious element envisages fuller life and deeper satisfactions than the merely physical, for "religion is essentially an eternal going out in search of completeness and wholeness of life, a quest for life in its qualitative wealth of content as well as in its quantitative fulness and range." He replies to the objection that this view is biological and not in any sense distinctively religious by insisting that "religion like all other aspects of the psychic life is ultimately rooted in the soil of biology though it does not find its full meaning there." Again "man's unquenchable thirst for life finds fuller satisfaction in religious experience than in any other type of experience; he finds in religion an ampler and more abundant life than in any other kind of behaviour." Religion raises his life above the mere biological plane and gives him a taste of the higher satisfactions which are to be found in the attainment of goodness, beauty and truth. Further, religion in distinction from all other facts satisfies the craving for fuller life by

invoking the aid of superhuman powers, usually personal powers and gods. So "religion is a method of enhancing and enriching life by the aid of supernatural agencies in whom are supposed to reside resources which are greater than such as abide in man, but which are available to man on certain conditions."

Now we may admit, without demur, that religion exists because it has been found biologically useful, for it could not have survived, nor could it be so universal a fact, if it did not meet some deep-felt need of human nature. But as Professor Miall Edwards has seen, we have to interpret "life" in this connection in a higher sense than the merely physical life. It is only on a view of "life" which involves the realization of moral and spiritual ideals that we can apply the idea of biological necessity to religion as a whole. It may be demonstrated, that religion when it is real does help in the struggle for physical life, and especially so on the primitive levels. If it did not, or if it were opposed to life, it would have eventually obliterated life. We may at least say that religion could not have hindered the life process. It would probably be true to say that it must have helped life. But inasmuch as religion moves in a higher realm than the merely physical it must, at the very lowest, have made some contribution to that higher aspect of life. In reality it is in this sphere that religion has made its chief contribution, for it has fostered intellectual life, given inspiration to moral effort and achievement, fired enthusiasm for noble ideals and lent its support to the struggle for freedom and larger life. The "*bios*" which it has helped forward is thus wider and deeper

than the merely physical. If we take this wider view of it we may accept the position of the Functional School and admit that it subserves life. But in thus interpreting "life" so widely we have really broken away from the general position of that school.

## B

We turn now to consider the second group of theories, those which regard religion as originating in a distinctive element in the constitution of man. Here, again, there are several classes and it will make for clarity if we keep them separate.

(1) Those who take a philosophical, rather than a scientific, view of psychology have leaned to the theory that religion originates in the higher side of man's being, not in his instinctive urges. They do not rule out an instinctive basis as far as the urge towards activity found in religion is concerned, but they hold that religion is more than this urge and lays more of man's nature under tribute than is found in his instincts. Probably the main reason why they refuse to accept the purely instinctive basis is the fact that there is something implied as prior to the instinctive urges themselves. There is at the heart of every instinct, as Professors Galloway and Drever have shown, a vague sense of need, with a dim awareness that some lines of activity are "worthwhile," as Dr. Drever expresses it. The urge which impels man to seek friendly and helpful relations with the wider environment of his life, including the vague powers that lie on the fringe of life, must have been preceded by a felt need. This need must have been present as a dormant or latent

factor in man's being before it could impel the instinctive activities in the direction of satisfying it, even before the stimulus from the fitting kind of environment could stir it into activity. Professor Galloway insists strongly that this sense of need is a mark of some incompleteness in man's nature, and that it causes an uneasiness which prompts activity as the effort to reach satisfaction and completeness. Without this feeling of incompleteness there could be no effort to find satisfaction; no urge to reach out to an object, and certainly no motive leading to religion. This view lifts the question of the origin of religion out of the purely instinctive level, basing it on an aspect of self-consciousness, or at any rate on the consciousness of need that is prior to the urges of the instincts. Along this line we find scholars moving in the direction of placing the origin of religion in the fact of self-consciousness itself. This was the position taken by Max Müller, who, by his examination of the bases of Indian Religion, concluded that religion springs from "a sense of the infinite," and that this is stirred through the influence of the larger nature-powers. Herbert Spencer takes very much the same position. To the same circle of ideas we may assign the views of Marett and many other scholars when they declare that religion first assumes form in connection with the conception of Mana, and arises from a capacity inherent within human nature, or from "a permanent possibility of religion in the constitution of man." If we admit this capacity there is no difficulty in understanding how the conception of Mana could arise. This conception, although it is found at its fullest and clearest among the South

Sea Islanders, where the term seems to be in current use, is yet found almost universally among primitive peoples. It may be described as a vague sense of living presences, or a consciousness of being alive in a world that is alive, a feeling of supernaturalism and a dim apprehension of personal presences and forces in the unseen. Marett regards it as the raw material out of which religion grows; as such it is prior to any specific form of religion and to all religious ideas. It belongs to what he calls "the pre-animistic stage," and he describes this stage as the stage of "animatism." Otto, in *Das Heilige*, has attempted to analyse this vague sense of unseen presences. He regards it as the plasm or stuff out of which the "holy" is derived. He finds in it a deep sense of "otherness" as of something standing over against the individual self-consciousness, a feeling—for he regards it as specifically feeling—that there is another out beyond the consciousness of each man. It also contains a sense of "tremendum," in other words a sense of awe that produces a feeling of creatureliness by its very power and greatness. But in spite of this overwhelming influence there is present also a feeling of fascination, that draws men towards it. Otto insists that this sense of the "holy" is a definite and distinct element in human nature, and that at its basis it is a feeling or a vague feeling-tone.

In this emphasis on feeling Otto joins hands with Schleiermacher in his well-known conception of religion as "a feeling of absolute dependence" on another. We find Sabatier, in more recent days, insisting that this very feeling of dependence in consciousness is the mysterious presence of God in

us, and that the idea of divine spirits springs from this source. Pfleiderer asserts that there is an element of "God-consciousness" in the consciousness of every man as part of the constitution of human nature, and that this is prior to all religious development. This is a specific element in the nature of man and from this religion and all religious practices spring. Edward Caird pushes the matter still farther back and asserts that the consciousness of man is itself in essence religious; so that when man thinks, he is really giving utterance to the Eternal Spirit Who works and energizes in and through him. Thinking itself, when men think according to the proper principles of thought, leads back to God. So religion arises from this fact of the kinship of the human spirit to the Divine Spirit. In recent days we find Hocking taking essentially the same position and insisting that, in the final issue, every idea implies *The Idea*.

It will be seen that to all these thinkers religion is regarded as originating when man, finding himself involved in the struggle of life, reaches out towards that "Other" which he is dimly conscious of as the source and background of his life. On this view, then, the whole of human consciousness is implicated in the origin of religion, and religion is ultimately regarded as springing from the fact that there is in the constitution of man's nature an element that leads him to give a "religious" interpretation to all his experiences and to adopt a religious attitude to all things.

We find another aspect of this position in those thinkers who seek for the origin of religion in the mind's quest for unity. The urge towards unity

which appears to be involved in man's self-consciousness implies the conception of a focal or unifying centre, and religion is supposed to arise in the effort to discover unity and coherence in experience; in the endeavour to understand life and its meaning. The definitely religious experience however is prior to any attempt at explaining it. Moreover, it is probable, as Schleiermacher and Pfleiderer insist, that the religious consciousness and the sphere in which religion is born are not the reason of man, using "reason" in the narrower interpretation of the term, but are to be found in the emotional aspect of his conscious life. Dr. Drever gives it as his opinion that an organism that had no feeling could not evolve any consciousness or initiate any movement. Wundt would evidently agree with the position that makes feeling basal, for he insists that the emotions are at the root of religious life, whilst Pfleiderer states definitely that feeling is the centre and core of the religious consciousness. If this be so, and there is strong reason for believing that it is, then we should expect religion to spring from the feeling aspect of man's consciousness rather than from the side of his discursive reason. We may reckon Höffding also as taking this view. We should note, however, that Höffding in another section of his *Philosophy of Religion* (Part III) seems to suggest that religion arises in man's quest for a cause, that is, it originates in the intellectual rather than the emotional aspect of his conscious life.

(II) Another group of scholars seek to derive religion from the moral consciousness of man. This was the position taken by Kant. In his *Critique of Pure Reason* he had subjected the discursive reason

to an acute analysis and criticism which ended in scepticism, more especially with regard to the usual proofs of the existence of God. But in his second volume entitled *The Critique of Practical Reason*, he finds a basis for the three great postulates of religion, God, Freedom, and Immortality. Kant assumes throughout that the moral consciousness is basal and that it gives us more insight into the nature of Ultimate Reality than any other aspect of conscious life. It is further implied that religion is based on the moral consciousness and springs from it. He does not, however, deal specifically with the origin of religion and we can only infer it from the general position he takes. In this general position he is followed by the late Professor Pringle-Pattison in his great work on *The Idea of God*, for he accepts the principle of Kant that the moral consciousness, as the consciousness of moral values, brings us nearer to, and gives us fuller and clearer insight into, Ultimate Reality than any other aspect of man's self-consciousness, and, as a corollary, that religion and the religious consciousness are based upon, and derived from, the moral consciousness. Professor John Baillie also, in his *Interpretation of Religion*, works out the same thesis and assigns the primacy to the moral consciousness.

This is a position which we shall have to examine fully later, but we may so far anticipate the point of view which we shall adopt on the question as to say that we cannot accept the view which regards religion as originating in the moral consciousness, any more than we can accept the position which discovers the origin of religion in the reason's quest for unity or for an interpretation of the world of

experience. This view relegates the religious consciousness to a secondary and subordinate position in man's nature, whereas if it is to have its full meaning and power in life, it must be basal to all else. It must be as deep as the deepest element in man's being and as high as the noblest aspiration and intuition of the soul, for it takes in the whole sweep of man's personality as nothing else does.

As an offset to those who seek to derive religion from one or other of the various aspects of man's conscious life, we have others who would place his religious experiences in the sub-conscious region of the mind and regard religion as springing from the subliminal self. This is the position worked out by the late Professor Sanday in relation to the experience and personality of Jesus Christ. In certain aspects of his thought William James would seem to favour a similar view, as does also Professor Pratt. On the other hand, Freud and the psychoanalysts in general place religion in the Unconscious and regard it as springing from the complexes that constitute the Unconscious region. As the Unconscious is a separate and distinct realm to Freud, with its own laws and principles and a mode of operation different from the ordinary processes of the mind—since it is made up of the complexes and repressions which form some of the undesirable forces of life—it is clear that he places religion in the weakness of man's nature rather than in its strength. He makes the noblest factor, the most beneficent force in life spring from the lowest element in man's being. This is a position which we find very difficult to accept. We might almost regard it as axiomatic from the psychological point of view,

on the ground of the fuller knowledge which we have acquired of human personality, that religion somehow springs from the whole of man's personality and must be based on that which is distinctive of his being. We may well believe that it lays under tribute and calls into its service all the instinctive impulses of man's being. But we are safe in inferring that it does not spring from those instinctive bases alone, though it claims and utilizes them, and in thus using them modifies and ennobles them. We are warranted then in concluding that religion springs from within the very nature of man; from that which is highest and best in his nature, that which lifts him above the animal. Springing thus from his nature, religion, when it becomes fully conscious of itself, affects the whole man. But the influence is one that works from above downward and not merely one that works upward from below. Not from the accidental facts of his life, nor yet from his environment does religion come, but from within man. It grows through the fuller surrender and consecration of that which is the deepest core of his being.

(III) Finally, there are those who hold that there is in man a special organ or instinct of religion, and that religion involves a faculty different from those which he exercises in the ordinary activity of his life.

The mystics have persistently maintained that there is a faculty or power in man higher than reason; that he is able by this to apprehend God. They declare that God cannot be known by the ordinary processes of discursive reasoning; that there must first be a catharsis of the mind and an elimination of

the elements of the rational consciousness so as to give this specific religious organ its opportunity to function and thus gain the knowledge of God. This type of knowledge is akin to intuition and is described as a kind of vision of truth, a gazing at reality in such a way that it brings immediate certainty, with something of the immediacy of sensation, as for example, in gazing at light; a knowledge of God which reaches its crown in the bliss of mystic union with Him.

With regard to this position, as a whole, we may say that few modern psychologists are prepared to admit the existence of this specific organ of religion, since it introduces a dualism into the human consciousness. Moreover, the trust in reason which is at the basis of Plato's faith, and which is the inspiration of all modern scientific and philosophical research, will not permit thinkers to posit any power in man beyond reason. We find a tendency also among some psychologists to believe that man has a definitely religious instinct and that religion arises in man when the fitting opportunity occurs for arousing this instinct. This is the position taken by many theologians, and some psychologists agree although they would not press the point as strongly as the theologians. Thus Morris Jastrow in his *Study of Religion* constantly speaks of the "religious instinct," insisting that this instinct is essentially of an emotional quality. Professor F. C. Bartlett<sup>1</sup> states it as his conviction that there is in man "if not a religious instinct, a religious interest or bent," which leads him to give a religious interpretation to the facts of life and experience. As

<sup>1</sup> *Psychology and Primitive Culture*, chapter VI.

already noted, Marett thinks that "our common human nature . . . embraces a permanent possibility of religion." Dr. Garvie<sup>1</sup> believes that there is in human nature "a capacity for religion," although he is not prepared to accept a theory of a definite religious instinct. The acceptance of an inherent capacity for religion seems well established, but it is not necessary to accept the view which posits a definite religious instinct. If, as we have suggested, religion springs from the whole man and implicates his total personality we do not need to suppose that there is a special organ or instinct of religion. All man's instincts are involved in religion, but it also lays all the higher aspects of his conscious life under tribute. Dr. William Brown<sup>2</sup> prefers to speak of a religious sense, but he distinguishes this from the "faculty psychology" which was in vogue at an earlier date. It may be regarded as a "form of a primitive tendency towards a religious attitude, (a tendency) to feel the mystery, beneficence, and perhaps the sternness of the spirit of the Universe." It is quite legitimate for us to accept this position, but we must again insist that in this tendency the whole of man's personality is implicated.

Bergson's views belong to this group, although he differs profoundly in some aspects of his thought from other members of the group. In his recent volume (translated under the title *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*) he has made an important contribution to the question of religion in general, as well as to the relations between morality and religion. In his previous works there was a

<sup>1</sup> *The Christian Doctrine of God*, chapter II.

<sup>2</sup> *Mind and Personality*, chapter XXIII, pp. 298 f.

vagueness and uncertainty regarding the ground on which his views rested. It was doubtful whether he based his philosophy on a theistic ground or accepted a more or less naturalistic vitalism. His "élan vital" seemed to lack a basis: there was an element of haphazardness in all the process he envisaged. In this new work he definitely and explicitly accepts a theistic background for all his process; even going so far as to identify the life force, which impels all movement and progress, with God. In speaking of "the creative effort of which all life is a manifestation," he says: "This effort is of God, if not God himself" (p. 88).

He maintains that religion and morality spring from the urge of life, from the "élan vital," the creative effort, or evolution—for all these terms are applied to the life force which is from God. In its urge forward, however, this creative effort comes to a point where it diverges: from this point it proceeds along two lines, each of which yields a type of morality and also of religion. There are thus two sources of morality and religion. One line of progress is in the direction of the instinctive life, leading to a cul de sac, in which there is great efficiency within a very narrow circle, but it is always within this circle and ends where it began. This state he speaks of as "somnambolistic," or as "evolution without plan," a working towards an end which is but faintly divined, if divined at all. The progress here issues in a kind of social life, such as may be seen in an ant-hill or a hive. The other line of progress is in the direction of intelligence; it has a forward look and issues in a society of men endowed with consciousness and intelligence. The instincts,

however, are not obliterated: they remain still at the basis of life.

Just as there are two sources of morality, so there are two sources of religion. The spectacle of religion in the past, and in some aspects in these days, is humiliating, for it cannot be called intelligent in spite of man's intellectual progress. It is rather "a veritable farrago of error and folly"; bound in superstitions and futile ceremonies often unnecessary or even unmeaning. All this is due to man's faculty of intelligence qua intelligence, for nature has seen to it that intelligence as such is under the sway of instinct, fettered by the instinctive urges. Instinct has succeeded in paralysing insight and clouding vision, bringing about a kind of somnambulism in religion and forcing intelligence to construct myths and images. The kind of religion thus obtained is static, doomed to petrification. It yields a round of rites and ceremonies, rules and regulations, but little real spiritual life. Such a religion is dominated by fear: it may help men to live by keeping them from adventurous flights and ordering life within regular channels. But it lacks vitality and misses the tides of progress. There is, however, another line of progress in religion also, starting from the higher intuition which man is capable of acquiring. In his earlier works Bergson had made us familiar with two kinds of intuition, one closely connected with the instincts as an aspect of the will to live. It is a kind of dim consciousness of the urge of life, rooted in the life force itself. But at the other end of the mind's development, when intelligence has reached the limit of its progress and power, another kind of intuition appears which may

be described as "metaphysical intuition," somewhat akin to the Greek conception of *Nous* ; higher than intelligence *qua* intelligence, for it transcends it whilst retaining it within itself. Real, vital, free religion springs from his higher element in man. In a remarkably able chapter on "Dynamic Religion" (chapter III) he finds this type of religion exemplified most fully in the lives of the Christian mystics ; it is the real essence of Christianity, finding supreme utterance in Jesus Christ. This profound and suggestive treatment has two points of merit in view of the position we have adopted. It bases religion on the deepest factor in human nature, on the will to live and the urge of the life force itself. Then it makes religion in its deepest meaning spring, at the impulsion of the life force, from the highest and most distinctive element in human nature.<sup>1</sup> Apart from static religion, from the superstitions and accretions of a mistaken growth, religion in its essence emerges from the spiritual and mystical intimacies of the soul. There is thus some affinity between this view and that of the mystics.

We are now in a position to sum up the main results of psychological research in this field and to point out the weakness of some of the theories propounded. We may say then :

(a) That psychology, in most of its advocates, seeks to explain religion and its origin in man naturally, without reference to anything supernatural. It is a basal principle among most modern psychologists that religion follows the processes of natural evolution as these are exemplified in all the other spheres of life. They therefore explain the

<sup>1</sup> See this chapter, p. 30.

origin of religion from below, seeking to prove that it springs from very lowly beginnings, and is thereby discredited. This is an assumption which very few philosophers or theologians would admit, for it is becoming more and more firmly established in science as well as in philosophy that value is independent of origin. If value were dependent on origin to the extent implied by so many psychologists, we should have to regard humanity as a whole as discredited, for it is an undoubted fact that it has evolved from very low beginnings. We must therefore protest against this assumption as unwarranted and unsound.

We must also take our stand against another assumption involved in the application of evolutionary theories to religion. It should be stated that we do not, nor need we, protest against the application of the theory of evolution to religion or even to the question of its origin, but we reject an inference drawn by the psychologists in connection with it. It is taken for granted that if religion can be shown to originate and function according to established laws, the need for God has been eliminated. This conclusion does not follow, for we might argue that God always acts according to laws and that the very laws of the mind by which man has learnt the process of logical thinking are ultimately His, inasmuch as the reason of man is a reflection of His mind. God comes and appeals to man in the ordinary processes of his conscious activity. He employs the laws of thought to make Himself known to men.

(b) Psychology, on the whole, tends to base religion on the instinctive nature of man and to regard it as springing from one or other of the instincts at

the root of his being. Here again it makes some assumptions that are baseless and cannot be admitted. It assumes, for example, that the instincts in man are largely the same as those of the animals. Leuba goes as far as to say that religious behaviour is very little above the capacity of animals. But such an assumption is unwarranted, for in the human realm we come into the region of self-conscious life, with the power of forming images and concepts and of reasoning from these. Self-consciousness must modify profoundly all the instincts at the basis of man's life, so that it cannot be maintained that his instincts are on a level with those of an animal. There must be some difference between them from the very beginning. It may be legitimate to regard the animal instincts as the stuff out of which the human instincts develop. But as soon as the level of self-conscious life is reached there must perforce be differences in the instincts themselves. One important difference is evident at once in that the human instincts may be controlled and utilized for purely ideal ends, in a way that is impossible to the animal. The habitual use of the instincts in the service of the ideal life and their control in view of higher ends must modify them very greatly. Moreover it is not impossible that in man instincts may develop which have no counterpart or prototype in the animal. Such an urge as that of the mind towards unity and the unification of all the facts of experience must be beyond the range of animals at their highest.

(c) We may regard it as a general conclusion among the psychologists that there is no specific religious instinct, although there are some psychologists

who are prepared to postulate such an instinct. We may, however, accept it as an established position that there is in man a capacity for, or tendency towards, religion, and that this impels him to give a religious interpretation to the facts of his life. But as against the persistent attitude of psychology in seeking to base religion on some one aspect of human nature, be it his instinctive nature with the psychoanalysts, or his reason in its quest for unity, or, again, his moral sense as in the case of Kant and others, we must hold that religion is based on human nature in its wholeness, claiming man's entire personality. It is the reaction of his whole being to the environment taken in its entirety. Within that environment, in that it is spiritual as well as physical, must be reckoned the fact of the Eternal Spirit, and we may go on to argue that religion is possible to man because of a certain kinship of his being with this Eternal Spirit. We may go even further and say that man's quest which is at the heart of his religion is in the first place an experience which afterwards demands an interpretation, and that the experience is in reality a response to an appeal from without. The deep in God calls to the deep in man and the "tides of the Spirit" in man reach out towards the ocean of being in God. The pressure of the spiritual element in the world upon his mind and spirit is but the appeal of the Infinite and Eternal to him, and it stirs to wakefulness this sense of kinship. This is really where religion begins, but this is too deep for the psychologist as such to analyse or even perceive. It lies in a region beyond his ken and no psychological experiment which he can devise, can reveal it. All that his science can do is to go as far as it possibly

can in its direction and then point the way towards a fuller understanding of it. But for this fuller understanding it has to hand over the problem to metaphysics, and most of all to religious experience at the deepest ranges of its being. This is why religion yields a satisfaction that nothing else can give, for in religion the whole man is at peace.

### CHAPTER III

## THE NATURE OF RELIGION

IT will be generally admitted that the findings of psychology as to the origin of religion must go some way towards determining its nature. But we cannot admit the claim brought forward by some psychologists that religion, in its nature and validity, is to be understood in terms of its origin. This assumption underlies the point which was emphasized in a previous chapter, that because religion can be shown to spring from humble beginnings, it is thereby discredited. Professor Tylor says very aptly that "no answer to the question of how we have come to hold a belief is itself an answer to the question whether the belief is true." We might insist with equal cogency that no theory of the origin of religion can answer completely the question as to what religion is in its essential nature. The truth is realized with increasing clearness in the realm of Science, more especially in Biology, that the nature of an organism is not to be discovered by an examination of its origin, nor yet by an analysis of the processes and the various stages of its development. The well-known Aristotelian principle of judging an organism by its end or in its most developed and perfect form is finding a place in modern scientific procedure. This implies that an object is to be understood as a whole, and its nature determined, not by its parts and the interaction of those parts, nor yet by the steps of its progress, but by its integrated and most fully developed state. And in line with

this view we must insist that religion is to be understood most fully, and its nature determined most conclusively, by an examination of its most mature form.

Several methods may be employed in approaching the question of the nature of religion and a brief consideration of these will help us to reach the heart of our problem. We shall be dealing in the main with the psychological aspects of the question, but since it is impossible to separate these completely from the historical and anthropological aspects of the study, we shall have to touch on these at various points. Nor can we leave out the more philosophical side of the question, for, in the final issue, the psychological elements shade off into the philosophical, and the findings of psychology rest on assumptions and considerations that belong to the realm of philosophy. Our main interest, however, is psychological.

(1) The first method is to seek for the essential element in religion by an examination of what religion has produced in the life of man and of human society. This is one aspect of the pragmatic view of reality and truth, a view which finds many advocates in the United States and not a few in this country. Hocking in his massive work entitled *The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, applies this method to religion. He is not prepared to accept the whole pragmatic position, for he strongly objects to the test of truth applied by the modern school of pragmatists. But he is prepared to adopt a negative pragmatic test to the effect that "that which does not work is not true" (*op. cit.*, Preface). Professor Hocking is here mainly concerned with the truth and validity of religion, but in the following

chapter he proceeds to apply this method to discover the nature of religion. He insists that so far as any form of religion hinders or fails to promote what we regard as "welfare," it must be judged false. He thinks that religion, which is at its best in real mystical experience, gives to life a value which is beyond the reach of fact, and a creativity which goes beyond the docility of reason. It will help us to find that essential element in religion if we consider what religion does, for it is best seen, not by introspection, but by its effects. An examination of its effects in history shows that it has influenced life deeply in some way or other, and this proves that it is dynamic in its nature. It is to be regarded, not as a useful adjunct to life, but as the parent of the best, charged with creative power. To it we owe the various arts, and, moreover, "all the arts of common life owe their present status to some sojourn within the historic body of Religion." Further, since the arts were originally regarded as a direct manifestation of the divine, so religion, and the experiences of men in their religion, reveal to us something of the nature of the Divine Spirit with Whom men hold converse in such experiences. It appears thus that Hocking would have us conclude that the core of religion is this intercourse of the spirit of man with the Great Spirit of the world, and that this gives to man a power and creativity which produce the highest and the best in history. Moreover, it brings to man a revelation of the nature of the Reality with Whom he has fellowship.

There is thus involved in religion a relationship to Another, some conception of, or conviction regarding the nature of this "Other" derived from

fellowship with Him, and a power received from Him that gives to man his creative activity at its highest.

Hocking takes feeling to be the primary element in religion. But he goes on to insist that the primary experience cannot remain as feeling. It must pass on into the knowledge or conviction which is involved in the experience, inasmuch as there is given in it a revelation of the nature of the "Other." The destiny of feeling is to pass into an idea, and he implies that it must also pass on to activity. Without this it becomes mere emotion or vapid sentiment, in which the essential nature of the experience is lost.

This is a masterly analysis of the situation and with its main position we can heartily agree. But it is not without its difficulties, as Professor Hocking has clearly seen. He points out that the influence of religion in history has not always been for good, and that in some aspects it has failed to promote progress. Such facts as the wars of religion and the persecutions and cruelties practised under the name of religion prove this. Some scholars have been so impressed by this aspect that it has become determinative of their conception of religion and of its essential nature. Thus M. Solomon Reinach defines religion as a "sum of scruples which impede the free exercise of our faculties." The main ground for this position he finds in the various taboos practised in connection with religion, and also in the fact that religion "implies a limitation . . . of individual volition and of human activity."

M. Reinach, however, claims to reach his view by an examination of what religion has done in history.

The fact that such opposing views of the nature of religion can be reached by employing the same

method proves that something more is needed than an examination of the effects produced by religion in history and in human life.

(2) Another method is that of examining the various forms of religion and seeking for the element that is common to them all. This is the procedure followed by almost all students of Comparative Religion and anthropologists. This method is perfectly legitimate up to a point. There must be an element common to all religions. More fully developed in the highest, it must be present in the very lowest type if it is to be regarded as a religion at all, just as the life which is present in every stage of a plant's growth is the same life. More fully expressed in the full grown plant, it was yet present in the first movements of the seed and in the tiny blade that first broke through the soil. So in religion. If then we are able to trace this element we shall know something of the essential nature of all religion. The difficulty with this method, however, is that, as far as we can see, it yields such a vague and unsatisfactory result that it is scarcely worth troubling about it. The theories reached thus "are condemned by their very insignificance." Professor H. R. Mackintosh speaks of this method as "seeking for the greatest common factor in all religions," and he points out that it labours under two defects. (a) Since it is a mathematical method it has to assume that every religion is of equal importance, when in reality this is not so. Then (b) if we could extract the common factor it would be too vague and colourless to be of any real value. An abstract statement of a common element would be worthless.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Christian Apprehension of God*, chapter I, p. 16.

(3) A third method of approach is to examine the *expression* of religion in the individual and to infer from this the nature of the experience which lies behind and is the source of his various religious activities. This is the method generally used by psychologists, and by its application different conclusions have been reached. Thus, through an examination of the various sacrifices offered as the expression of religion, one school of writers, represented by Robertson Smith and others, infers that the essence of the experience of religion is to be found in an attitude of friendly intercourse with the gods which is symbolically expressed in a Common Meal, at which the God and the worshippers partake together, and into which there may enter the idea of partaking of the nature and sharing the life of the God. Another school, on the basis of the same fact of sacrifices, comes to the conclusion that the attitude is one of fear and dread of the spirits or gods. Similar inferences are drawn from the facts of prayer, of the religious dance, and of the incantations that may develop into songs. Probably the most important view reached along this line is that of Leuba,<sup>1</sup> who holds that the essence of religion is to be found in the behaviour itself. In other words, religion is a specific kind of behaviour. He is ready to admit that there may be elements in religious experience that do not issue in overt acts, purely subjective factors that may have some influence on life, even though they may not lead to definite action or behaviour. But "psychologically religion is a kind of activity, a mode of behaviour." In seeking

<sup>1</sup> See for his views his books entitled *A Psychological Study of Religion* and *The Psychological Origin and Nature of Religion*, *passim*.

to discover what is the distinctive element that marks off the religious behaviour from all other kinds, Leuba distinguishes three types of behaviour—the mechanical, the coercitive and the anthropopathic. The mechanical may be seen in such a fact as the determination of the distance which an arrow flies by the tension of the string. It is behaviour that has no reference to personal beings or to any powers endowed with intelligence and feeling. The coercitive is the behaviour evoked by some force or compulsion from without. This may have reference to personal beings, but it is the realm in which magic operates rather than religion. The anthropopathic includes the ordinary relations to other men as well as to spirits and gods. Its specific character lies in the fact that it is behaviour which has to do with forces that are responsive to psychic influences, and has to be adapted and modified according to the relations in which each being stands to the other. Religion belongs to this type and is the kind of behaviour suited to, and modified in relation to, supernatural powers or forces. Leuba is not prepared to say that these powers are personal. It is behaviour . . . “to a class of powers which may be characterized as psychic, superhuman, and usually, though not necessarily, personal.” Now if we press the question as to the definitely religious element in this behaviour, the answer which Leuba seems to give is that it is the behaviour on the part of man whereby he seeks to make use of these superhuman powers. “What makes life religious . . . is standing in relation with or attempting to make use of a particular kind of power” (i.e., superhuman power). “It is that mode of behaviour in the struggle of life

in which use is made of powers characterized as psychic, superhuman and usually personal." Again and again Leuba insists that in religion man seeks to make use of superhuman beings or powers as helps in the struggle of life, and he regards religion as one phase of the will to live, or an expression of the procreative urge. This is in line with his position that the conative element is the basal one in all conscious life and that therefore religion is based on biological necessity. It exists because it subserves life and helps man in his struggle against the hostile forces of the world. We need not quarrel with the view that religion is an expression of the will to live and that it subserves life, providing we interpret the term "life" here in the widest and most exalted sense.

Looking at Leuba's position as a whole, we may say, in the first place, that he seems in his treatment to confuse the attitude of man in religion with his attitude in magic. Leuba has himself insisted that magic holds mainly in the realm of coercitive behaviour in distinction from anthropopathic. On that account we may infer that there is a difference between them, although it may not be easy to distinguish them in the early phases of primitive life and thought. But when he comes to deal with religion as a type of anthropopathic behaviour he falls back on the attitude of magic. It is generally agreed among students of Comparative Religion that the essential difference between magic and religion lies in the fact that whereas in magic man seeks to manipulate and use the superhuman powers for his own ends, in religion he may be said to offer himself to these powers to be used of them. One is an attempt

to coerce the superhuman powers and subject them to the will of the individual so that he may use them to do his will; the other is the voluntary surrender of the worshipper to God and the subduing of his will to the powers. If this distinction is valid, and it is accepted by the great majority of thinkers in this field, then Leuba is moving on the plane of magic rather than of religion, when he insists that the essential element in religious behaviour is the effort to make use of the superhuman powers by man for his own ends of self-preservation in life's struggle. Only by a very wide extension in the meaning of the term "use" can Leuba hold his position. He cannot mean that man determines the issue and has power to compel the superhuman beings to give him their aid. This is undoubtedly the case in magic, but in the religious relationship there is always the consciousness that the fulfilment of man's desire does not rest in the hands of man. It rests on the will of the beings whom he invokes and with whom he seeks to come into relations.<sup>1</sup> He places himself in the hands of the spirits or gods, and though he regards his action as likely to influence them, he never loses the consciousness that it is their will that must ultimately be done. He is prepared to let them have their way and if necessary to use him for their own ends. This is certainly truer to the religious attitude than the one suggested by Leuba.

Moreover, the difficulty of Leuba's position is greatly intensified by the fact that he does not believe that the superhuman beings into whose fellowship man comes in religion have an objective existence, for he says definitely: "I cannot persuade myself

<sup>1</sup> See Heiler, *Prayer*, chapter I, on this point, pp. 1-12.

that divine beings, be they primitive gods or the Christian Father, have more than a subjective existence."<sup>1</sup>

Again, we may argue against his theory on purely psychological grounds. Behaviour is itself a secondary product, whether we view it from the standpoint of sensori-motor activity, or as based on the instinctive urges. It always implies some feeling or sense of need, a state of consciousness that precedes it. The behaviour always has some reference to this previous state, and it can never give us certain knowledge of this state. Like all behaviour, religious behaviour is dependent on a conscious state that precedes it, and is an effort to give expression to, or seek satisfaction for, this state. It is itself, then, a secondary product and we can never be quite sure of the conscious state, which is the really essential element in religious experience and life, by an examination of the behaviour which issues from it. Religious behaviour springs from an experience and is based on some incipient urge or some movement of the spirit of man. This is, in the ultimate, a response to something or someone that appeals to it, and that offers or promises itself as a satisfaction of the need which is the basal element in the experience. We are therefore only at a secondary element when we regard religion as essentially a type of behaviour.

There is one more point of criticism to make of Leuba's position in general. His conception of what constitutes religion and spiritual life is so wide that it is difficult to distinguish between it and that of conscious life in general.<sup>2</sup> In a note he says that by

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, chapter I, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *A Psychological Study of Religion*, p. 3.

"spiritual life" he means consciousness in general. This would make it possible for an animal to share in spiritual life. But if spiritual life is to be the prerogative of self-conscious beings, and to have a meaning that differentiates it from the consciousness of an animal, there must be some distinguishing element in it. Leuba seems unwilling to admit this, for he states definitely that religious behaviour in man is very little above the capacity of animals. Further he believes that "the ideas of ghosts, spirits, etc., arise naturally from the normal use of the ordinary mental powers, and that in their crudest forms they are but little beyond the capacity of the higher animals."<sup>1</sup>

Against this we must insist that man is a religious being because of an element in his nature which the animal does not share. He bears in himself "an element of God consciousness however dim, and this proclaims its community of essence with its source." He is religious because his nature seeks for "the Infinite" from Whom it derives. His effort to find and have fellowship with God is the response of his being to the approach and appeal<sup>2</sup> of the great "Other," whose presence within him is that which raises him above the animal. Religion, in the final issue, is the experience in which the deep in man goes out and meets the greater deep of the Spirit of the World. It is the fellowship of the finite spirit with the Great Spirit from Whom it comes and in Whom is its home. This relationship, springing

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, chapter I.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. "A revelation of God is present wherever a real religion is found. Where God is known, it may be even imperfectly and through a distorted medium, there He has in some degree allowed Himself to become known, yes, made Himself known." N. Söderblom, *The Nature of Revelation*, 1934. Section I.

from and based upon the need of man and the appeal of God, is what constitutes the core and essence of religion. Religious behaviour issues from it, and all prayer life and sacrifices, as well as all rites and ceremonies, are but attempts to foster and deepen that relationship, or efforts to express it.

(4) Another method of approach is to take the religious experience and seek to discover what is the basal element in it. This is then taken as the essence of religion. Good work has been done along this line, and the result has been that each of the different aspects of conscious life has been taken in turn as the basal factor. Thus many psychologists regard fear as the essential element in early religion and argue that the fear attitude persists in all stages although it may be disguised in various ways. As stated, McDougall thinks that the characteristic feature of religion is the complex emotion of awe and reverence. Awe is itself a complex emotion formed of fear and wonder—fear in the presence of terrifying and destructive objects and forces, and wonder which, in spite of fear, prompts men to approach and to continue contemplating these objects. Reverence is a still more complex emotion, compounded of awe and gratitude. When the object that excites awe is good, it evokes gratitude and this, blending with awe produces reverence “which is the religious emotion par excellence.” In this way McDougall holds that the emotion of reverence is of the very essence of religion and that beliefs and actions follow from this. His position thus agrees, on the whole, with the one we have stated above, that religious behaviour is preceded by an emotional reaction to, and a relation with, supernatural beings.

Probably the most important and influential exponent of religion as feeling is Schleiermacher, whose famous definition of religion as "a feeling of absolute dependence" has moulded religious thought in certain quarters for generations. In this view he is followed largely by Ritschl and by Tiele. Schleiermacher was himself influenced by Fries, whose theory of "Ahnung" as a kind of intuition of supersensible realities—a perception or sensing of realities without material or logical proofs—gave him his cue in opposing the excessive rationalism of his time. The most thorough examination and analysis of the feeling element in religion is made by Rudolf Otto, who accepts Fries' view of "Ahnung" (see his *Philosophy of Religion*). In his book *Das Heilige*<sup>1</sup> he regards the essential element in religion as a kind of feeling or intuition of the "Holy."<sup>2</sup> Otto has undoubtedly made a valuable contribution to the fuller understanding of the attitude and meaning of religion.

Among the other psychologists who hold that feeling is basal in religion, we may mention Morris Jastrow, Hocking, Galloway, Pfleiderer, Sabatier and Caldicott.

Another influential school of psychologists and philosophers maintains that the essence of religion is to be found in the rational aspect of consciousness. Religion, on this view, is regarded as consisting in convictions about reality, or in beliefs concerning super-human beings. From a slightly different point of view, it is thought to be an effort to interpret and explain the mysterious forces that lie in the

<sup>1</sup> Translated by Harvey under the title *The Idea of the Holy*.

<sup>2</sup> See the previous chapter for Otto's views.

background of man's life. Some who take this stand-point combine with it the idea of moral values. Probably Höffding is the most prominent modern thinker who emphasizes this view, for although he admits that "feeling is the essential element in all religion," he advances from this position and comes finally to hold that "The core of religion . . . consists in the *conviction* that no value perishes out of the world." "In its innermost essence religion is concerned, not with the comprehension, but with the valuation of existence, and religious ideas express the relation in which actual existence . . . stands to that which, for us, invests life with its highest value."<sup>1</sup>

This view has found many supporters in recent days and it undoubtedly emphasizes an element that must enter into religion in its more developed forms. Amongst those who accept it may be mentioned the late Professor William Morgan,<sup>2</sup> Professor John Baillie<sup>3</sup>, and from another point of view the late Professor Pringle-Pattison. Professor Baillie begins his interesting treatment by insisting that religion is not a matter of philosophical speculation, and definitely rejects the rationalistic theory of religion. But he comes in conclusion to a view that religion is essentially a matter of reason, for it is a *conviction* and an *assurance* that religion is more than merely doing our duty. He then brings in the idea of values as expressed by Höffding and states that "religion is essentially a product of our consciousness of values." It is more than the mere consciousness of value for it "has to do with the relation of

<sup>1</sup> *The Philosophy of Religion*, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *The Nature and Right of Religion*, chapter I, pp. 11 f.

<sup>3</sup> *The Roots of Religion in the Human Soul*, chapters II, III and V, pp. 45 f. and 205 f.

value to reality." "All religion has its root in the irresistible conviction which comes . . . that in such values as those of love, human personality, etc., we are striking rock bottom and have the key to the cosmic order. From this comes all religion." Again "Religion is essentially a matter of finding a deeper meaning in duty . . . a deeper and more prophetic significance in our values." There is much that is significant in the position taken by Professor Baillie, but it is open to criticism at several points. He insists rightly in his first chapter that religion is not mere feeling, but in the final estimate of religion as "the consciousness of values . . . in relation to reality," he brings in an element of feeling, for, in the ultimate, values depend on feeling and are determined mainly by the emotional reaction of each person to any situation or experience. Moreover, although he rules out the purely rationalistic conception of religion as consisting of beliefs and attempted explanations of unseen realities, yet in emphasizing the fact that religion is a conviction, he brings in the rational element and the factors of belief and explanation. The most serious criticism of his position, however, arises from the fact that he bases religion on the moral consciousness of man, thus making the moral consciousness primary and basal to all the life of religion. We shall deal more fully with this point a little later.

Professor Miall Edwards<sup>1</sup> accepts the view that the attempt to understand religion in terms of the idea of values is more likely to lead us to the heart of the matter. But he makes important modifications of the position as a whole. Thus he admits that the

<sup>1</sup> *The Philosophy of Religion*, chapter V, pp. 145 f.

consciousness of values is not *always* present in the religious experience. It is certainly implied . . . "for man knows full well that his own powers are not adequate to the task of realizing and conserving human good." But although it is an implication it may not be present in the consciousness of the religious man. Professor Edwards might have gone even further and said that it is not present in the religious experience of the vast majority of men, unless they happen to be philosophers or highly trained thinkers.

Again, Professor Edwards points out that the idea of values and ends is too abstract apart from the human and personal values. He rightly insists, with Lotze, that values are connected with feeling and the satisfactions that come to personal beings. He quotes Lotze as saying that "What we mean by value in the world lies wholly in the feeling of satisfaction or of pleasure we experience from it." He makes two points of criticism of Höffding's view, insisting that (a) "he fails to do justice to the active and purposive character of the religious consciousness," and that, therefore, it is only a kind of "passive faith in the conservation of values that already exist." The religious consciousness, however, "is not content with merely maintaining the status quo." It demands and seeks for an augmentation of values, an increase of good.

(b) In the second place, Höffding's view ignores the intimate personal relation to a superhuman being or beings which is so characteristic of the religious consciousness. Professor Edwards points out that "conservation of value as a mere 'axiom' is impersonal," whereas religious experience has

within it an element that is analogous to the trust which one person may repose in another person mightier and better than himself. "Religion is not merely faith in an impersonal principle of conversation, but confidence in the 'Friend behind phenomena' who cares for us and who has the power and the will to carry our efforts to victorious ends." He sums up the position in these weighty words: "Religion is no mere *belief* in a Super-sensible Reality as the seat and source of all values. It is still more the emotional response and volitional reaction to that Reality, the adjustment of one's whole life so as to bring it into unity and harmony with such Reality."

We might add to these two points the further criticism, that the position which makes the essence of religion lie in the conviction and consciousness of values in relation to reality bases religion ultimately on the moral consciousness, and makes it thus subservient to the moral consciousness. This criticism was suggested briefly in connection with Professor John Baillie's view, and we have now to consider it more fully. Kant, in his final estimate, derives religion, as well as the basic truths of religion, from the moral consciousness. Moreover, he makes the moral values determinative of the nature of ultimate Reality and assumes, as Pringle-Pattison has shown, that we get a deeper insight into and a fuller knowledge of that Reality by way of the moral values than in any other way. The result is that religion is grounded on the moral consciousness, and, as Professor Miall Edwards says, it is "practically identifying the religious with the moral consciousness." Those philosophers who have followed

Kant in emphasizing moral values have been content to leave religion thus as based upon, and, in a sense as derived from, the ethical nature of man, as may be seen in the case of Pringle-Pattison in his first series of Gifford Lectures<sup>1</sup> and in a less pronounced degree in the Gifford Lectures of W. R. Sorley.<sup>2</sup> Among the theologians who accept the Kantian tradition the same view is expressed, as is evident in the cases already mentioned, those of Morgan and John Baillie. Professor Baillie has stated his views more explicitly and fully in a later book<sup>3</sup> but he takes essentially the same position as the one we have examined. We may give one more quotation from the book already mentioned. "To believe in God is, at least in its beginnings, hardly more than a deeper way of believing in duty" (p. 221). Elsewhere he admits that there is something more in religion than is found in morality and he suggests that this "something more" consists of the reference of Moral Values to Reality, that is, I presume, their reference to God. In this way we are brought back to the position of Kant, this position being reached by an acute psychological analysis of the contents of the moral consciousness.

Now we cannot acquiesce in a position that subordinates religion and the religious consciousness thus to the moral consciousness, for this is to surrender the primary and supreme value of religion for human life. As against this we must insist that, although religion belongs to the realm of values, it constitutes the highest value. In it, as Höffding himself admits, human nature is functioning at its highest,

<sup>1</sup> *The Idea of God.*

<sup>2</sup> *Moral Values and the Idea of God.*

<sup>3</sup> *The Interpretation of Religion.*

with a harmony and intensity which it finds nowhere else. Philosophers and psychologists have proceeded on the assumption that religion is subordinate to the moral consciousness, or if not subordinate, at least only on a par with the three aspects of consciousness known as the Rational, the Æsthetic, and the Moral Consciousness. We would, on the contrary, suggest that the religious consciousness is the whole of which these are aspects, and that as such it constitutes a higher value. It is generally agreed that the three aspects mentioned have historically originated within the sphere of religion. In Greece the beginnings of philosophy can be traced back to religion; the very terms and concepts of the early discussions are those found in the ancient Olympian religion.<sup>1</sup> Further, the beginnings of art are found to be closely related to religion,<sup>2</sup> and it is a well established fact that morality begins within the sphere of religion and that the earliest moral sanctions are derived from religion. On the other side it can be shown that the three aspects of consciousness we are discussing come to their fullest and most intense utterance in the realm of religion. Religion contributes something to them that lifts them to a higher level, to a more complete life. We may well believe that the values with which the Rational, the Æsthetic and the Moral Consciousness deal, give us insight into the nature of Ultimate Reality. They lead us to the conclusion that Reality enshrines Truth, Beauty, and Goodness; that Reason, when properly used, interprets something of the very essence of reality. Art likewise gives expression to

<sup>1</sup> See Cornford's *From Religion to Philosophy*, pp. 73 f.

<sup>2</sup> See Miss Jane Harrison's *Primitive Art and Ritual*. See also on the whole question Pfleiderer's "Religion and Religious Faiths," Lecture 2.

that Reality in its aspect of Beauty, and Morality gives us insight into Reality as Good. In all these we have a real disclosure of the Nature of God. But in religion, as being more comprehensive, and as implicating man's personality at a deeper range, we have a richer and fuller revelation of Reality. As the whole of which the others are aspects it gives us clearer insight into the nature of God. It can take us one step further in our quest for Reality, for it gives us an assurance which none of the other disciplines yield, that Reality is personal and can and does respond to the approach of man. He discloses Himself in all the discoveries of truth; reveals Himself in the beautiful and the appeal which it makes to the spirit of man; utters Himself in the moral struggle for the good and in the satisfaction which man enjoys when he achieves the good. But He gives Himself more fully to "the humble" and reveals Himself more clearly to the "pure in heart." More of man's personality is energizing and implicated in religion, and so more of Ultimate Reality is disclosed to the religious consciousness. We touch Reality at a deeper point and gain greater assurance in the intimacies of fellowship with God. "Religion . . . is not one thing among many, existing side by side with the others on equal terms. It is the whole of life viewed *sub specie aeternitatis*. It is the intensifying and the sanctifying of every human function, faculty and activity." Professor Miall Edwards quotes a striking saying of Schleiermacher in this connection.<sup>1</sup> "A man's special calling is the melody of his life, and it remains a simple meagre series of notes unless religion, with its endlessly

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 160.

rich variety, accompany it with all notes and raise the simple song to a full voiced harmony." So we might say that Reason, Feeling and Will, or Truth, Beauty, and Goodness are each a single melody, and each beautiful in its own way and with a value all its own. But in religion they become fused into a unity and a harmony that are deeper and richer than their separate contributions, and in this they find their fullest expression, their true end. Religion thus takes its place as the crowning point of life's values and as the medium for the fullest understanding of the Reality that lies behind and beyond all life.

We come now to the consideration of the views which regard religion as essentially a matter of the will. This is probably the view which has the strongest support from the side of psychology, for it falls into line with the prevailing tendency in its emphasis on conation, as well as in its growing interest in the instinctive impulses that lie at the basis of human nature. We have already seen how the central position given to the will by Leuba led him to his conception of religion as a type of behaviour. In a different way McDougall also throws his weight on this side, for although he regards the complex emotion of reverence as of the essence of religion, yet he treats all the emotions as connected with, and derived from, the instincts. It may be argued also that those who connect religion with moral values base it, in the final issue, on the conative aspect of consciousness, since morality is a matter of voluntary choice. Moreover, all those who regard the cultus as an essential element in religion, and treat it mainly as a matter of rites and ceremonies imply the same position. Leuba's general view has already

been considered, but there is another aspect of his teaching that demands consideration at this point. In his recent volume<sup>1</sup> he insists that there are two types of religion. One "consists of objective businesslike transactions with God" whilst the other "consists of communion or union with God" . . . or even "absorption in the divine substance." He proceeds to prove that the first type is devoid of any mystical elements and that its real nature consists of businesslike transactions with God. Leuba would have us understand that one type of religion is essentially activity, the expression of the conative urge, whilst the other is a matter of feeling, even reaching the degree of yearning for absorption in the divine. Heiler also distinguishes two kinds of religion,<sup>2</sup> designating one mystical religion and the other prophetic religion. He quotes Söderblom and Seeberg as making a similar division. Among the points of difference between the two types he emphasizes the fact that the psychical experience in mysticism is a yearning "for freedom from the bonds of the physical organism in order to soar to the heavenly heights, to return to the infinite and the divine from which it sprang," whilst in the prophetic religion the basal experience "is an uncontrollable will to live" . . . "a constant impulse to the assertion . . . and enhancement of the feeling of life."

In reality, the weakness of all the views which treat religion as if it were derived from any one of the various aspects of man's self-conscious life lies in the fact that they make an unwarranted cleavage in consciousness, and that therefore they make man

<sup>1</sup> *The Psychology of Religious Mysticism*, chapter I, pp. 2 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Prayer*, chapter VI ff. Jung distinguishes two types of men—the Introvert and the Extravert. See his *Psychological Types*.

religious only in a part of his being. Man is not religious, when religion is real to him, in his reason or his will or his feeling only. He is religious in them all, in his whole manhood at its highest and best, for religion lays every faculty and power under tribute. It raises every aspect of consciousness to a level of higher and more intense life, and in the integrating power of communion with God, it renews and transforms the whole man.

From the point we have now reached it will be evident that the most promising line of approach to the understanding of the nature of religion is that of examining the individual in his religious attitude. This method has its difficulties, for no one can enter in to the experience of another individual. The only one who can explain or describe the experience is the person who "lives through" it. Probably the reason why so many psychologists and philosophers have been vague and uncertain in their interpretation of religion is to be found in the fact that many of them are devoid of any deep religious experience, and that, for that reason, they are dealing with secondary rather than with primary facts. It is in the experience itself that we are to find its essence, and the psychologist or philosopher who is a deeply religious man is at an advantage in this sphere. Professor J. B. Pratt has approached the problem from this point of view.<sup>1</sup> He concludes that religion is really *the attitude* which the individual adopts towards the powers which he conceives as having ultimate control over his interests and destiny. This attitude presupposes the existence

<sup>1</sup> See mainly *The Religious Consciousness*, pp. 2 f., and also some portions of *The Psychology of Belief*.

of some object and some sort of content, but it is itself "an active state of consciousness" involving the three aspects of conscious life. It may be described as an attitude of a self towards an object in which the self genuinely believes. But it is not the belief that is prominent, for religion is not a theology but a life which has to be lived through rather than reasoned about. Pratt has undoubtedly struck the right trail. Following this path, we are able to penetrate more deeply into the real nature of religion than by any of the other methods we have hitherto considered, and we have now to make this attempt by dwelling on some of the main phases of religious experience.

We may say first that religion, whatever else it may mean or involve, is essentially a relation between personal selves. In the primitive stage of religion, the spirits with whom man seeks to come into contact are regarded as personal in the same sense as primitive man himself. Moreover, the conception of *Mana* which is the stuff out of which religion grows, is always regarded in the ultimate as based upon, and derived from, personal presences.<sup>1</sup> There are in it, then, undoubted spiritual and personal elements. All through the development of religion, this sense of being in the presence of, and having fellowship with, "Another" who is in a real way personal, lies at the basis of religious experience. This is the point of distinction between the religious consciousness and experience on the one hand and

<sup>1</sup> Karstan quotes Hocart—a recent student of Melanesian Life and Thought—as saying that "Mana is a permanent attribute of ghosts, spirits and persons." He confirms the position stated earlier by Codrington, that Mana is always connected with spirits, ghosts or men. Hocart further says "that the word is out and out spiritualistic." See Karstan. *The Origins of Religion*, pp. 41-2.

the rational, the æsthetic and the moral consciousness on the other. In philosophy, as the highest activity and expression of the rational aspect, man's attitude is directed towards an Abstract Reality, such as an Absolute, or an Idea of the Good, etc. If philosophy goes further than this, as it does in many modern thinkers such as Ward, Sorley, Pringle-Pattison and others, and regards the Absolute as Personal, it is only by bringing into the philosophical attitude elements derived from religion. The goal of the purely intellectual quest is some Idea or Conception that shall form the crown of the edifice of reason in its demand for Unity. By its own principles it need not regard this Idea or Conception as in any way personal. Only by envisaging a satisfaction that is deeper and more complete than the purely rational can it proceed to regard the final term as personal. In other words, it has to bring in an element of religious satisfaction with its demand for a personality that responds to and meets the religious need. In the same way, morality and moral experience do not involve an explicit reference to a person. The moral consciousness is satisfied when it refers to and concurs with a law. We may say then that in the ethical consciousness the reference to a person is only an implication, and is not explicit. It only reveals itself to elaborate philosophical research. In religion, however, it is in the foreground, being in reality of the very essence of the experience. To such an extent is this true that if the reference to and experience of the "other" is wanting, the experience ceases to be religious in the deepest sense of the term. Morality is and must be a personal matter, for it implies relations

between the moral self and other personal selves. But, if the expression may be used, it is personal on one side of the situation only. In the ethical situation, the moral element stands over against the individual as Law; the authority, as Kant insisted, is that of a Categorical Imperative. The "Other" in this case is quite adequate to the situation as Law. On the other hand, the personal factor is of the stuff and fibre of the religious experience. It is so from the earliest relations of man to the spirits, and even from his consciousness of unseen presences and living realities as evidenced in Mana. In the same way the æsthetic experience may imply a Personality in whom beauty finds its foundation, but this reference again is not in the foreground, for the æsthetic consciousness may and does find satisfaction in abstract beauty or in impersonal beauty, as in natural scenery. There is always present a tendency to personify the scene and to treat it as the expression of some personal will, a tendency more evident in the æsthetic enjoyment of art, and still more of music. But even here it is far less explicit than in religion, for religion is in essence the converse of person with person; spirit with spirit meets in an intimacy and a fellowship which are not possible in the other disciplines which we have considered. From this position certain other conclusions follow and a brief consideration of these will lead us still more deeply into the nature of religion.

(a) In a relation between persons there is involved a give and take on both sides, an approach and a response which imply the committal of each to the other. This is a characteristic mark of all fellowship and intimacy on the human level. There are

always involved a give and take, an offering and an acceptance, an outgoing and a receptivity in all intercourse of human persons. The deeper and more intense the fellowship becomes the fuller is the committal of each to the other and the reception by each of the other, until in the fellowship of pure love it becomes in a sense, a fusing of personalities, an interpenetration of one spirit by the other. But even in the more casual and ordinary intercourse of human life, there is a degree of committal implied in the very trust which men have in each other. Now it may be said that an element of trust with the committal of the self which it involves is present in all religion, for in the relation of primitive man to the spirits he has to trust himself to them, and in a sense offer himself to them. As religion develops and becomes deeper and more ethical this element grows richer and fuller, until in the highest experience of the mystic it becomes such a surrender of the self in trustful love as to become for the time being a kind of absorption in the divine. From the other side also it is to be regarded as a committal, an offering or an appeal from the Eternal Spirit to the spirit of man. Man's committal or surrender is a response to this appeal, an offering in response to a previous giving on the part of Reality or God. Religion is the moment and experience when the two spirits meet; it is constituted by the intimacy and fellowship thus attained. It might justly be argued that there is such a committal and offering of the self in the other disciplines we have considered. Does not man commit and throw forth something of himself in the pursuit of truth? Is there not a measure of self-giving—even sometimes to the limit of agony—

in the pursuit of the good and the effort after nobler life? Can we not say that man gives himself in a very real sense in the creation of beauty and the utterance of his spirit in music? And in the æsthetic enjoyment of art and music is there not some virtue that goes out of a person so that he may be said even here to give himself? We may acquiesce in all this for, in the ultimate, Truth, Beauty and Goodness are expressions of the Eternal Spirit in the World. He approaches us and claims us in all these, so that our part in them is a response to His approach and a reception of His self-disclosure. But we must insist again that the committal is deeper and fuller in the religious experience, that more of man's personality is involved, and at a higher intensity than in these experiences. For that reason the fellowship which the spirit of man enjoys with the Spirit of God in religion yields him a deeper satisfaction and a fuller measure of power in life than is possible in the other experiences. Here his spirit is living its true life and breathing its native air. It feels at home in the presence of God and finds there its peace. So we may say with Gwatkin<sup>1</sup> that the essence of "all religion is a *trustful communion*" with personal beings, "however it may be debased by mean conceptions of what is great or good." The essence of religion is found in this personal relation with the personal world-life. Bosanquet speaks of "the central supreme good in every facet and issue of heart and will."<sup>2</sup> "We are saved by *giving ourselves* to something which we cannot help holding supreme." He goes on to say that in this experience

<sup>1</sup> *The Knowledge of God*, chapter I, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Professor Miall Edwards—*op. cit.*, p. 155.

and committal of ourselves to the supreme, we are at peace and find rest, and "there is nothing anywhere within the world or without that can make us afraid." Professor H. R. Mackintosh<sup>1</sup> insists that "religion . . . is self-surrender to the supreme," and that this surrender is "the soul's response to the divinely felt presence of God." This is "due to an affinity between them." This affinity shows itself in a "dim consciousness" that "the soul is born for higher things, and in a longing for a perfect life"; it is this which impels men to the "Other." It reveals itself also in man's sense of need of uniting himself to a power that evokes his trust. Leuba comes at one point to a similar conclusion, for he says,<sup>2</sup> "The religious experience consists . . . not in seeking to understand God, but in feeding on Him, in finding strength and joy in Him." "There is a radical difference in the attitude of understanding and that of finding joy in God. Philosophy searches for explanation, religion assumes knowledge and maintains dynamic relations with psychic powers greater than man. The religious consciousness seeks being, the philosophical consciousness seeks knowledge" . . . "religion postulates, philosophy inquires. In religion God is felt and used."

(b) We can now take a further step and say that the basal and predominant element in the experience of fellowship with God is emotional. It is in the realm of emotion that persons become most closely united. Here it is that fusion or interpenetration of persons takes place, as is evident in the deep union

<sup>1</sup> *The Christian Apprehension of God*, chapters I and II, pp. 19 f.

<sup>2</sup> *A Psychological Study of Religion*, chapter II, pp. 23 f.

of spirit and life achieved in pure love.<sup>1</sup> This is also exemplified in the fusion of an audience under the sway of emotion through the power of an orator or actor. Such a fusion is deepest in the realm of religion, as every preacher knows, for there are times when the audience seems to enter into a new phase of experience through which it becomes a real communion of saints, a spiritual fellowship of "one mind and one heart." Such a fact implies some common ground of life and consciousness, a community of life and mind between the different units. But it implies also that this "community of life and consciousness has its ground in a spiritual reality greater than the sum of the units." It is this consciousness of God's presence and the sense of His overshadowing power that produce the spiritual fellowship and unity which form the core of the experience. In feeling, then, we become most at one with each other and with God. If this be so,<sup>2</sup> it becomes clear that those who argue for a non-mystical type of religion cannot sustain their case. There must be a mystical element at the heart of all truly religious experience, and this is what develops into the fuller and more exalted experience of the mystic properly so called. But whilst we must insist thus that the heart of religion is emotional, we must also state that it is more than mere emotion. There is awareness of the presence of the "Other," with whom men are in fellowship, with a conviction, implicit perhaps, that the Other is really existing

<sup>1</sup> See Moberly—*Atonement and Personality* for a working out of the theory of fusion.

<sup>2</sup> James Ward argues that the basic fact in all consciousness is a vague feeling continuum and that within this the various differentiations gradually appear as reason and will, etc.

and that intercourse is possible with Him. Moreover, there is the conative urge or impulse which arises from the sense of need, prompting to the effort to satisfy that need. These factors may only become evident on examination, but they are present at the very outset in the original and unexplained experience of religion. We do not, therefore, mean that all is feeling, but that feeling is the essential and determinative factor in consciousness in the religious attitude. Further, we must believe with Hocking that the religious attitude cannot remain in the condition which implies the original predominance of feeling. It must pass on to the interpretation of the feeling and of the relationship, so that the destiny of feeling is to become an idea or a conviction. Further still, it is destined to pass into activity in prayer and worship, in sacrifice and in conduct. Without this twofold development, the feeling itself tends to degenerate and to become weak and sentimental, and so to end in vain dreams and futile superstitions.

(c) It will be evident now that religion claims the whole man and lays every aspect and facet of his being under tribute. We are able to understand thus how religion is the whole of which the other values are aspects, and how it is possible for man's personality to attain a harmony and a fulness of life in religion that it attains nowhere else. In religion man lives his true life; he realizes his true being. In sacrificing himself and committing himself in trust to the great world-spirit he finds himself enriched and ennobled. Through giving himself he realizes himself, for he substantiates and affirms the oneness of his life with God, and he draws from

God a more abundant life. This is the reason why religion, when it is real, is a source of power, of enhancement in life. William James speaks of certain aspects of religious experience as bringing men into a realization of a larger world, and Dr. Rufus Jones regards religion as adding spaciousness and buoyancy to life. This is possible because the spirit of man is in touch with its creative source and is drawing power and an increase of life from God. In this way it is able to gain a victory over the world, to triumph over the trials and disappointments of life, secure in the inward peace that comes through resting in the shadow of the Eternal.

## CHAPTER IV

# PSYCHOLOGY AND THE RISE OF RELIGIOUS IDEAS

THE rise of religious ideas has sometimes been confused with the origin of religion itself, and there have been many thinkers who hold that we do not find religion in a specific sense of the term until religious ideas have developed and taken definite form. If, however, we regard religion, in accordance with the findings of the last chapter, as an experience whose essence consists of a relationship of trust and surrender to "Another," it will be evident that this experience must be prior to any ideas as to its meaning and source. Ideas arise as an attempt to interpret experience, either by way of making it intelligible to the person experiencing, or in order to explain and make it articulate to others. Such ideas, we may assume, are possible without language, although in a restricted sense, for when language develops and terms become current coin for certain concepts, the range of ideas and ideational thinking becomes greatly widened. It is, however, not possible to make ideas intelligible to others or to communicate or interpret the experience to them without language in some form. But at every stage of mental growth experience must precede interpretation. Ideas arise as explanations of a prior experience. It may, therefore, be possible for religion to exist without ideas. Marett is of opinion that "religion may exist before ideas, such ideas as those of spirits, ghosts, soul and the like,

exist." Clement Webb quotes Burnett as saying that "ancient religion has no doctrine at all," so that the worshippers are quite free to give any explanation that suggests itself to their religious experiences. Webb himself is of the opinion that primitive man did not trouble about religious beliefs or the ideas these were meant to make explicit. Religious ideas are a sign of, and develop around religious experience, for although the relation of an idea may be closer and more intimate than that of a rite or ceremony to the "inward spiritual condition," it is none the less a sign of the spiritual experience which constitutes the essence of religion.

We have seen that the French School represented by Durkheim and Lévy-Bruhl regards primitives as thinking differently from civilized peoples. We have, however, decided against their view. We have also come to a negative conclusion with regard to the theory that certain religious ideas are innate and do not depend on experience. There is undoubtedly a tendency in the human mind to give a religious interpretation to the facts of the world and the events of life, a tendency based ultimately on the kinship of man's mind to the Eternal Mind. This kinship, however, is not to be interpreted in the sense that certain ideas are innate, or that they may be found more or less complete in the mind apart from the mental activity of each person. Ideas are products of thinking, and though they may be used as means of further thinking, they are in the first instance effects, not causes. Kant finally disposed of the theory of innate ideas by showing that what the mind contributed were certain forms, such as those of time and space; or

categories, such as causation, substance, etc. The modern argument for the existence of God on the ground of moral values derives from Kant. Modern psychology has added its weight against the theory of "innate ideas," by its genetic treatment of the rise of ideas. This has been done in connection with Moral Ideas<sup>1</sup>; with Social Ideas and Institutions<sup>2</sup>; and the same treatment is being applied to the rise and growth of religious ideas. A number of students have examined the mythologies and the folklore of ancient peoples, much valuable material being gathered in this way. In this chapter we shall examine the various theories advocated by such workers as have approached the question along psychological lines, in the endeavour to discover a view that shall prove satisfactory in the light of all the facts.

Before proceeding to a consideration of these theories we may state certain conclusions that are already generally accepted.

(a) It is acknowledged by many scholars, though not by all, that the fact that certain religious ideas are found wherever man is found is best and most adequately explained by the view which regards the human mind and the human spirit as bearing within themselves a certain kinship to the Divine Spirit. Other explanations have been given of the "Consensus Gentium," as it is called. But no other explanation fits the facts so well or gives such coherence to the content of man's religious consciousness and his experiences in religion as the one suggested above. We are, therefore, warranted in provisionally accepting it.

<sup>1</sup> E. G. Westermarck's *Origin and Development of Moral Ideas*.

<sup>2</sup> E. G. McDougall's *Introduction to Social Psychology*.

(b) When we come to examine the various religious ideas we find in them all a symbolic element, due mainly to the fact that they seek to express the inexpressible, and are struggling with realities too great for language and thought. Religious ideas have been discredited by some on account of their manifest "anthropomorphisms," but some such expressions and figures are inevitable in dealing with realities that transcend the logic of thought. It would not be difficult to prove that science also has its "anthropomorphisms." It makes use of symbolic language and ideas in expressing its principles and conclusions. Thus when it speaks of the Universe as a mechanism or an organism it is speaking figuratively ; and when it enunciates the principles of the Unity and Uniformity of Nature, or of Causation, it is really employing anthropomorphic forms of thought. When religious men speak of the personality of God and of the Divine Love, they are but applying to the Eternal Reality the noblest conceptions of their minds and interpreting God by the highest they know. The figures used are not regarded as exhaustive of the Infinite Reality, but they are taken as expressive of certain aspects of His Being. Thus when, for example, religious thought regards and speaks of God as Father, it is not meant to signify that God's being is limited to the aspect represented by Fatherhood. He may be infinitely more. What it asserts is that, whatever height or depth may be in Him, and however many aspects or modes of being may be His, Fatherhood is one aspect of His being. It asserts that the reality for which Fatherhood at its noblest,—in its self-sacrifice and self-giving love,—

stands in man, has a place in God. Although the human reality be but a dim shadow, or a vague intimation of the reality in Him, it at least helps us to understand one aspect of the Eternal Spirit in His attitude towards, and activity on behalf of, the world of men.

(c) It should also be stated that whatever conclusion is reached regarding the rise of certain ideas, that conclusion cannot be applied to all the facts. We are probably right in assuming that it is possible for similar ideas to arise out of different situations and from varying environmental conditions. It needs no great insight to realize how in this way the same ideas may arise out of dissimilar circumstances, or how differing ideas may spring from the same situation at different times. These facts make it improbable that any one view of the rise of religious ideas can cover all the facts and we must be prepared to find that more than one theory is needed.

(d) We have already rejected the theory of a primitive revelation of religious truth; of an exalted monotheistic faith handed down *in toto* from heaven. In like manner we must refuse to accept the view which regards all religious ideas as coming in this way. This view leads to a species of "occasionalism" that makes it impossible for any ideas to be really man's own, wrought out from within as the product of his own mental effort. This does not mean that there may not be a self-disclosure of the Eternal to man, which can be regarded as a revelation, for the very process of thinking and the ideas reached in the process may be a response on the part of the mind to an approach or an appeal from without. Moreover, there is a revelation of God

in the very nature of man.<sup>1</sup> The primitive revelation is in man himself, in the kinship of his being to the Great Reality. This carries within itself the possibility of his response to the truth and reality without, when they make their appeal to him. In other words, it carries within the possibility of discovering the revelation of God made in Nature and in history, and in this way of finding out progressively the truth about God. Such a revelation can only come to a mind that is active, and by the ordinary processes of thought, but it presupposes the capacity in man and the preparedness of his mind to grasp and understand the self-disclosure which God is making through Nature and through the events of history. We may well believe that what constitutes "preparedness" is the growing harmony of the mind of man with the Spirit of the Universe, or as we may say, the growing intimacy of man with God and the progressive appropriation of the Mind of God which this intimacy yields. As man's mind approximates to the Divine Mind, and grows more in harmony of will and purpose with the Divine Spirit, so it is able to perceive and catch the self-disclosure He makes and to read His mind.<sup>2</sup> In this way the truth about God grows, and in every case it grows through the influence of men whose spirits are attuned to His Spirit, whose minds are prepared to receive what He gives. Such men are the prophets and seers of the world, luminous points

<sup>1</sup> See the quotation from Söderblom's *The Nature of Revelation* given in a footnote on page 87 of chapter III.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. "The portals for revelation in the human personality are three, the intellect or understanding; the intuition of infinity, with its emphasis on feeling, and the urge of the ideal or the conscience. These three are by no means of equal value." Söderblom *The Nature of Revelation*, Section II.

in the progress of truth, the interpreters of the Divine Will and the organs of Divine Truth to the world. We may surmise that all religious ideas came, in the first instance, to some such genius, some primitive seer who was able to survey truth from a slightly higher point of view than his fellows. The records of the past tell us of a few such men; for they became the founders of religion; but history is silent regarding the far-off primitive mind on whom the higher truth first dawned and who formulated with travail of mind and soul the first vague ideas about spiritual realities. All that we can do is to conjecture how these ideas came; and to form as reasonable a theory of the process as we can. Probably our most promising field lies in the study of how such ideas arise in the child mind. But even this has its difficulties, for the process in a modern child is complicated by such facts as heredity, environment and tradition.

It is obviously impossible within the limits of a single volume to deal with the rise of all religious ideas. We shall, therefore, confine our study to four outstanding ideas. These are (1) The Idea of God; (2) of Worship; (3) of Sacrifice; and (4) of Immortality.

In this chapter we shall consider the rise of the Idea of God.

## THE IDEA OF GOD

### A

There are, in this connection, two problems, and although it is not possible to separate them completely, it will be well to treat them separately as far

as this can be done. One is the rise of the idea of God's existence, or, in a wider sense, the idea of the existence of supernatural beings; the other is the origin of ideas as to the nature and character of these supernatural beings or of God. These two problems are obviously different, for it is possible to believe in the existence of such beings and deny that we can form any idea of their nature and character. Stratton makes a distinction between belief in the existence of gods and belief in their value, or in their possession of qualities or characteristics that are of value. He insists, further, that belief in the existence of gods does not necessarily issue in acts of reverence and worship. Worship is only offered when to belief in their existence there is added the belief that they possess qualities that command reverence and adoration. They may be feared for certain malignant or baneful qualities, or respected and worshipped for qualities that are beneficent and good. We shall consider first the rise of the idea of the existence of supernatural beings, for we shall assume, for the time being, that the idea of gods and ultimately of one supreme and only God, develops out of the belief in spirits and supernatural beings. Thouless who treats<sup>1</sup> of the roots of belief in God in the higher religions, when monotheism is established, concludes that there are in all three possible sources. These are (a) The influence of tradition, environment and training operating by way of suggestion. (b) The experience of each individual. Here may be included such facts as the influence of the beauty and harmony of the world on the spirit of man; the experience derived in man's effort in the moral

<sup>1</sup> *An Introduction to the Psychology of Religion*, Chapter I, p. 12.

conflict; and, finally, certain profound emotional experiences. (c) At a later stage the powers of reasoning may lead to the conclusion that God exists.

It will be evident that the first and third of these factors can only be operative when social life has undergone a considerable development, and the mental powers have grown. They cannot, therefore, apply to the rise of belief in the existence of superhuman beings in the primitive mind. The second factor, however, is of paramount importance in dealing with the ideas that come to men in the early stages. It constitutes the chief sources of such ideas. Such a conception as that of Mana is due to certain experiences that come to individuals, the vague sense of being alive in a world where everything seems to have life, issuing in the consciousness of strange and mysterious presences. There may be several stages in the progress from the conception of Mana to that of Spirits. Marett is probably right in insisting that the stages which he names "Animatism" and "Teratism" precede the stage of belief in Spirits. But it is an interesting fact that, as far as can be ascertained, no peoples have remained at the stage in which "Mana" *per se* is the only type of belief. Nor does it seem that any peoples have rested at the stage of Animatism or Teratism. They have combined with these, or have passed through them to, the idea of spirits or personal beings in some form. By some latent logic of the mind, even at its earliest stages of development, men have tended to interpret this sense of life and movement in the world in a way that implies personal beings. It will be evident, then, that the crux of the problem is this tendency of the mind to give a

personal interpretation to the facts of the Universe that impress men and to regard these as caused by personal forces. We shall not go far wrong if we regard the more developed ideas of gods, and finally of the One God, as due to the same urge or disposition of the human mind.

Our question then, at this point, is Why does the human mind tend to interpret the mysterious or impressive facts of life and of the world in a personal way as implying personal or spiritual forces? It will help us to find an answer to this question if we examine how such ideas arise in children. Piaget has given careful and detailed study to the development of ideas in the child mind at various stages of its growth, and his conclusions are of great value and importance in relation to the point we are here considering.<sup>1</sup> The first aspect of conscious life is the consciousness of self as a centre or focus of needs, appetites, and desires. This may be, and undoubtedly is, at first vague consisting of nothing more than the sense of need as being in some indistinct way *his* need. The fuller development of this consciousness comes through dissociation from the reality that surrounds him.<sup>2</sup> There is in the child mind, from the beginning, a tendency to endow inanimate things with life and consciousness. This tendency appears very early, but later than the consciousness of self. The primal experience of the world is that of a vague continuum without any differentiations of

<sup>1</sup> *The Child's Conception of the World.* Leuba in his latest volume *God or Man* suggests that the problem should be approached from a study of the child mind. Chapter III.

<sup>2</sup> Of course, his consciousness of self only emerges in his awareness of a world over against him. It is through the intractable nature of things outside him, what Freud calls the "Reality Principle," that he comes to understand his own needs and desires.

matter and mind, of living and inert, of conscious and unconscious. Piaget suggests that this was really the condition in primitive man's world. He did not distinguish within this continuum the material from the spiritual, and it was because he did not make this distinction that all things appeared to him to be endowed both with material properties and with will. Within this vague continuum the first differentiation seems to be that of things living and things inert. Later, as being more abstract, the differentiation of things conscious and things unconscious appears. Piaget has traced in an interesting way the rise and growth of these ideas at various stages of childhood and he concludes that the idea of life is more familiar and easily conceived than that of consciousness. When it first appears it is assimilated to activity in general and seems to mean "to do something," or "to be able to move." It appears thus to be born in the sense of activity, of voluntary effort and efficiency in the child's own consciousness of self. Life seems to be synonymous with "causing" or doing something; it seems to imply a power immanent in an object making it active or producing motion. That which fulfils this function to the child mind is "life." Piaget asks whether this notion is primitive and inherent in the mind or derived. He concludes that it is primitive and inherent, since it is found in children as early as the third year and even earlier, before they can really know the meaning of "life."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Karstan (*The Origins of Religion*) maintains that "at all stages of religious evolution the essence of Divinity is Mystery" (p. 25); and that in primitive thought "what is divine is primarily that which interferes in a mysterious way, with the destiny of Man," p. 161. (The italics are mine.)

In the second stage of mental growth life becomes more definitely assimilated to movement, and it probably is correct to believe that at this stage moving things in general are thought to possess the characteristics of life. At a still later stage, life is assimilated to spontaneous movement, and finally to the movement of animals and human beings.

In examining the rise and growth of the differentiation of conscious and unconscious, Piaget concludes that this is to some extent based on the prior idea of life, and that it is the child's classification of things into living and not living that guides him in attributing consciousness to them. There is a stage in the child mind when it seems to attribute consciousness to all things, although even here consciousness tends to be connected with activity of some kind. The mind, once having reached the vague idea of consciousness, develops towards clearness and definiteness by the same stages as those by which the conception of life grows, the second stage being the ascription of consciousness to things that move as distinct from things inert. The third stage, in like manner, is the limiting of consciousness to things that move of their own accord. This stage is reached through the discovery that some moving objects exist whose movement is not self-governed. In this way a connection is made between consciousness and spontaneous movement. In the fourth stage consciousness is restricted to animals and human beings.

Piaget, after this examination, considers the bearing of the facts thus ascertained on the conception of primitive animism. He distinguishes between "diffuse animism" and "systematic animism," the

former being a general tendency found in children to confuse the living with the inert, whilst the latter may be regarded as the sum total of animistic ideas and beliefs held by children. It will be seen how closely this division follows that which Marett finds in primitive thought between "animatism," as he calls it, and "animism" proper. Piaget insists that "diffuse animism" is implicit in the child mind; that it shows itself as a general trend of mind, a kind of framework into which explanations are fitted, rather than a consciously conceived system of belief. This implicit animistic background may be compared to the primitive conception of "Mana." It is aroused in the child and so causes it to sense the diffuse animism of his environment, by two facts. One is the resistance which he discovers in some objects when he fails to make them do what he wishes them to do. In this way he is compelled to regard them as "living" and as possessing power. The other fact is the appearance of something strange and unusual. In this way animism and animistic interpretations "must be regarded as resulting from an implicit tendency in the child."<sup>1</sup> In a subsequent chapter (Chapter VII), he insists that a child's thought begins with a lack of differentiation between the living and not living and that all is a kind of vague continuum, but "it is an undeniable fact that child thought starts with the idea of universal life as its primary assumption." "From this point of view animism is in no sense a product or a structure built up by the child's reflection, but is a primitive (inherent) principle, . . . it is not built up, but results from a primitive property of the mind . . . so it

<sup>1</sup> *The Child's Conception of the World*, chapter V, p. 190 and pp. 229 f.

depends on a fundamental peculiarity of child thought." It needs very little reflection to see how closely this result of the examination of the child mind as it forms its conceptions of the world coincides with the views of such anthropologists as Marett, and such psychologists as Wundt and Bartlett, in their inquiries into the primitive mind.

On the basis of these findings we may accept the position that there is in the human mind, inherent and rooted in its very constitution, revealing itself from its earliest operations, a tendency to give an animistic or spiritual interpretation to the facts and objects of the world, and that it is through this tendency that the idea of the existence of spirits grows. The idea of the existence of God or gods is a growth from this primitive beginning. We are not here concerned with the process by which the idea of spirits is purged of materialistic elements, nor with the successive stages whereby the idea of God becomes moralized and universalized. We are here content to establish the position that the idea of the existence of spirits and spiritual presences, and, as a development from this, the idea of God, is based on, and derived from, a tendency inherent in the mind, and that this tendency is stirred to activity by the appeal which the outside world makes to it. Clavier,<sup>1</sup> in his examination of the rise of the idea of God in children, concludes that it arises before the child is three years old, and when it appears it is always anthropomorphic. But it arises, as does the need which it is meant to supply, out of a previous "religiosity." He uses the term "religiosity" to mean an attitude and feeling that is prior to definite

<sup>1</sup> *L'Idée de Dieu chez l'enfant*, p. 21 f.

religious ideas, expressing merely the vague sense of religious need. He concludes further that the idea of God is not an affair of education nor is it a notion imposed by parents or teachers. It is more profound than anything which education can impart, for in the intelligence, in the feeling, and in the moral sense of the child there are those innate tendencies which help the conception of God to be formed. The concept has its roots deep in the most intimate part of his being. "There are some things in the child, prior to all educating principles and tendencies, in which the idea of God takes its roots." The idea of the existence of superhuman beings, and within this the possibility of the idea of God's existence, arise thus out of an urge which is inherent in the mind, rooted in the very act of awareness and thought. This is the position which Edward Caird advocates with such power and brilliance in his Gifford Lectures on "The Evolution of Religion." We can now pass on to the consideration of the second aspect of our study and seek to discover how the various ideas of the nature and character of God arise.

## B

Here we shall be concerned with a number of important theories, for psychology has, in recent days, been fruitful in ideas on this question. We have to limit our field to some extent, since it is impossible to consider all the various ideas that arise regarding God. Such a study would need several volumes. It will, therefore, be convenient to consider the rise of such ideas as God as Creator,

Father, Moral Governor, and, finally, as Self-giving and Sacrificing Love.

(1) *The Projectionist View*

This is the view adopted by many modern psychologists, notably those of the Psycho-analytic School. They hold that even the idea of the existence of God is due to the tendency of the mind to project its own experiences and to embody them in some imaginary being, or to personify them and make them appear as really existing beings. They go further and declare that there is no objective reality corresponding to these projected ideas. The only reality which they possess is that which they have as subjective states of consciousness. There is in reality no God; His supposed existence is an illusion. It has to be admitted that this illusion is one that has haunted the race throughout its history. Moreover, it has been of great service and help in the struggle of life. But this does not really save the idea from being illusory, nor does it prove that there is any reality behind it. When the thoroughly scientific age has come and psychology has done its perfect work, the illusion will stand revealed for what it is in reality, and it will then disappear as no longer necessary in a world in which science is supreme. This is a brief statement of the essential position taken by such men as Freud, Jung, Tansley, and others of the Psycho-analytic group. In this general position Professor Leuba agrees, although he differs from the school in some other aspects of his thought. We are not, at this point, concerned with this view of projection as a general theory, except in so far as it bears on the rise of ideas as to God's nature and character. In

relation to such ideas we find in these psychologists two suggestions. There is first a tendency to regard them as due to this projecting power of the mind. Thus the idea of good and evil spirits, which in the final stage of its development becomes the idea of a good God and of an opposing power such as Satan, is born through the projection of the beneficent and malignant forces of nature into personal powers, and their embodiment in personal forms of good and evil nature. Again, the idea of a Moral Governor of the universe is but a projection of some aspects of the moral struggle in which man finds himself involved in the world, with its punishments when he fails, and its commendations and consolations when he is victorious.

The second suggestion, however, is the prevailing one among the Psycho-analysts, although this is itself based to some extent on the mind's habit of projection. This is the view which regards such ideas of God as Creator, Father, and Moral Governor, as due to a regression of the mind to an infantile stage of thought. This view is so central to the position of the school; it has exercised so great an influence on some phases of modern religious thought, that we must examine it carefully. Freud had stated this view with more or less definiteness in some of his earlier works, but he has given a fuller statement of the whole position in his last book.<sup>1</sup> Here he begins by considering what religion has done for men. "It gives them information about the source and origin of the Universe"; "it assures them of protection and final happiness amid the changing

<sup>1</sup>"New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis," Lecture 35, pp. 202, ff.

vicissitudes of life "; and " it guides their thoughts and actions by means of precepts which are backed by the whole force of its authority." Why should religion combine these three functions? We can discover the reason if we subject it to genetic analysis. Its doctrine of the origin of the universe is " that the universe was created by a being similar to man, but greater in every respect, in power, wisdom, strength of passion, in fact, by an idealized superman." Two interesting facts emerge at this point, that this creator of the universe is always a single God, and is nearly always a male. Now we get insight into the source of this idea of God as a creator when this God-Creator is openly called " Father." So " psycho-analysis concludes that he really is the father clothed in the grandeur in which he once appeared to the small child. The religious man's picture of the creation of the universe is the same as his picture of his own creation." Thus the idea of God as Creator is a regression to the infantile image of the father. With regard to the protection and final security offered by religion the same is true. " The same individual to whom the child owes its own existence, the father, . . . has protected and watched over the weak and helpless child, exposed as it is to all the dangers which threaten in the external world ; in its father's care it has felt itself safe." Man, even when full grown, still feels himself helpless and in need of protection amid the dangers of life. But he now knows that his father is strictly limited in his power, so he " looks back to the memory-image of the overrated father of his childhood, exalts it into a deity, brings it into the present and makes it real." " The emotional

strength of this memory-image, and the lasting nature of his need for protection are the two supports of his belief in God." Again, in connection with the ethical precepts of religion, "the same father who gave the child his life . . . also taught it what it may or may not do, made it accept certain limitations of its instinctual wishes and told it what consideration it would be expected to show towards its parents, and brothers and sisters, if it wanted to be tolerated and liked as a member of the family group, and later on of more extensive groups. . . . This whole state of affairs is carried over by the grown man unaltered into his religion. The prohibitions and commands of his parents live on in his breast as his moral conscience; God rules the world of men with the help of the same system of rewards and punishments; and the degree of protection and happiness which each individual enjoys depends on his fulfilment of the demands of morality; the feeling of security with which he fortifies himself against the dangers both of the external world and of his human environment, is founded on his love of God and the consciousness of God's love for him. Finally, he has in prayer a direct influence on the divine will and in that way insures for himself a share in the divine omnipotence." It only remains to state that in his early works, Freud found the rationale of this process of projection as well as the force that impelled it, in the urge of the sexual instinct, so that religion in all its aspects is the sublimation of the Libido. And more especially is the conception of God as love based on this instinct of sex.

Jung is more definitely concerned with the rise of religious ideas than Freud, for the chief motive of

his study is that of discovering the origin of myths, and the religious conceptions behind the myths. Like Freud he regards religion as the result of subjective processes only, with no reality corresponding to the conceptions formed by the mind. Myths and the conceptions implied in them are due to the fantasy-forming proclivity of the mind, more especially in its infantile period. The race in its development has conserved some of the early fantasies of its infantile life, and these are embedded in the racial mind. They lie buried in the psychic stuff of humanity; fragments of the soul life of the race; memories and dispositions which form the basal stratum of the mind. So the myths and religious conceptions which are found throughout the world have originated in the fantasies of the infantile period of racial life. It is this fact which explains the similarities of myths throughout the world. Now, if we ask what is the source of this fantasy-making tendency of the mind, Jung comes into line with Freud in saying that it arises from the urge of the libido. But here again he reveals important differences. He takes a wider view of the libido and does not limit it, as Freud does, to the urge of the sex instinct. In Jung the libido may almost be regarded as the life impulse itself, and from an examination of his writings we gather that it expresses itself along three lines. In the first place, it is life-creating, and from this aspect of its manifestation arises the idea of God as the creative power of the Universe. The symbol for God in this aspect is the Sun with his vitalizing and life-giving power.

The second expression of the life urge is revealed in what Jung calls a desire for rebirth and renewal,

and this is manifested in the many myths of returning life. This urge of the libido leads to a desire to be a child again ; to go back to the care and protection of the father. From this arises the conception of God as Father. This urge is, in the final issue, based on an incest wish. The libido manifests itself in yet another way, as the desire for independence ; and as independence can only come to the child by sacrifice, there arises the myth of the sacrifice of the hero or the idea of a Saviour. This idea becomes incorporated in the idea of God and finds its most complete expression in the Christian Religion with its conception of a suffering Saviour. In this way the various ideas as to the nature of God and His relation to the world are built up, but they have no objective reality corresponding to them. These ideas, once established through the operation of the projecting tendency of the mind, lie embedded in the racial heritage, forming part of the soul life, which each individual receives from the past.

Tansley and most of the other Psycho-analysts accept one or other of these two views, and they also accept the position that all religious ideas about God and His nature are mere projections.

There are two main points of criticism of this position in general. We are not here concerned specifically with the idea of the existence of God, nor with the views of this school as to the reality, or otherwise, behind this idea. We may, however, insist that the fact that the idea is a projection, granting for the moment that it is so, is no real proof that it has no reality beyond that of the subjective activity of the mind. Many other ideas, some of them basal to philosophy and science, such ideas as the unity

and uniformity of nature, causation and others, are, in the final issue, projections. We may say the same of the basic conception of Law and the laws of nature. These are not illusions because they are projections. They have validity and reality even though they are projected from man's own mind into nature. Similarly it does not necessarily follow that the idea of God has no reality behind it because it is a projection. We may, however, pass over this point and consider the bearing of this general position on the origin of such ideas of God as we have examined, and here two points of criticism may be made.

(a) The projecting tendency of the mind is regarded by the psycho-analysts as resting in the unconscious region of the mind, the sphere which includes the complexes and regressions which are, more or less, abnormal factors and powers in the life of man. Freud regards it as somewhat akin to the fantasies and hallucinations of a paranoic. Tansley speaks of it as a "weakness of the mind," whilst Jung treats it all through as distinctive of the infantile stage of thought. It is to all an aspect of the lowest and weakest activity of the mind. So these ideas which have been the most potent factors in the progress of humanity towards higher and more ethical and spiritual life are born out of the worst elements of man's being. This is opposed to the natural reason of things and could only be true in a universe which is irrational at its core. If we are to believe in moral progress and spiritual stability, we must assume that the best in the world is based upon, and springs from, the best in man and not from his worst.

(b) We may, in the second place, inquire why the mind of man projects its experiences and ideas in this way, and the only adequate answer is to be found in the position which was stated earlier in this chapter in connection with the operations of the child mind and the mind of primitive man. This is the view that there is a kinship between the human mind and the Universal Mind which is behind and within the world. On this view we may argue that the tendency to projection is itself due to an appeal from without, a response to an approach on the part of the reality which is for ever pressing in on man, and seeking to give itself wherever it can find entrance. Projection is thus the mind's leap out to grasp something outside that is offering itself and appealing to it. In this way the very activity of the mind in projecting authenticates the reality of that to which it leaps; the activity itself presupposes that there is already present in the mind before it projects, some element that is of the same nature as the reality which discloses itself to it. We may put this in religious language by saying that projection is one factor in the receptive attitude of man's mind to the self-disclosure of God. So the ideas which we have been considering arise in man's endeavour to understand and make clear to himself the nature of the Reality which impinges upon his life and makes its claim upon him.

### (2) *The Sociological View*

We have already dealt with the views of Durkheim and the French sociological school, which finds the origin of religious ideas in the clan life and experience. God has objective reality and existence only

in the sense that there is a group mind greater and more powerful than the individuals, or even the sum of the individuals, within the group. We need not dwell on this view at this point. There are other views, however, that demand consideration, such as the views of Wundt and Leuba.

(a) Wundt in his monumental work on *Folk Psychology* has dealt, at some length, with the rise and development of religious ideas. He admits in his Preface, that his main conclusion, that the idea of God arises through the fusion of the clan-hero ideal with the previously existing belief in demons, cannot be proved, for the "transition of a demon into a god can nowhere be pointed out with certainty." Conclusions in this realm can "seldom be based on actually given data, for these are inaccessible to direct observation." This leaves us with "psychological probability as our only guide, and we are driven to that hypothesis which is in greatest consonance with the sum total of the known facts of individual and of folk psychology." The subject is treated in three stages, primitive man, the totemistic age and, finally, the age of heroes and gods. We can have no direct and definite knowledge of the first stage, so that we have to seek a psychological explanation of the thoughts and beliefs of primitive man on the basis of facts supplied by ethnology. In the second stage the clan chieftain holds sway, and here we have only fabulous narratives and stories which grow into myths. In the third stage, the tribal chieftain gives place to the hero, and with the appearance of the hero we come into a different thought world, a world mirrored in heroic songs and epics. When the hero becomes a national figure and national religion

grows, there takes place another important development, for attention is no longer directed to the immediate environment. It tends to become focussed in the heavens. In this way the idea grows of a higher and more perfect world, and God becomes the ideal hero who dwells in this perfect, celestial world. Two forces in the main are operative in the process whereby primitive religion grows into the higher stages and ultimately to the world religions. The first is the pressure of external conditions of life, the second, and more important, is man's own creative power. In his examination of the thought of primitive man Wundt insists that all through he thinks in concrete fashion, with few ideas and ill-formed concepts. There are two classes of ideas more important than others. These are (1) a group of ideas supplied to consciousness by the direct perceptions of daily life, and (2) a class that does not represent things of immediate perception. The latter originate in feeling and are the product of emotional processes which are projected outward into the environment. To this class belong all that is outside the realm of perception; all that is held to be supersensuous, and in this realm all mythological thinking has its place. The objects of perception are supplemented by realities of a non-perceptual nature which are regarded as belonging to an invisible realm behind the visible world. To this category also belong the earliest beliefs and these centre around magic and demons. Two motives are, in the main, operative in producing such beliefs, death and sickness. Death frightens and fear becomes supreme. Through death the idea grows that something has gone out of the dead body, and in

this way the conception of something different from the body is reached. Here we have the root of the idea of spirits. Sickness also terrifies, for it is thought to be due to evil spirits, and thus the idea of demons develops. Such ideas do not come from reflection; they rise from the emotions and are due to projections. Ideas are merely the materials which the emotions elaborate. Their origination in the emotions further accounts for the fact that these ideas are regarded as supersensible; and such a conception as causality—which to primitive man is only the causality of magic—gets its stamp from the emotions. Wundt seems to imply, although he does not state, that this tendency to project emotional experiences into the external world and thus give personal or supersensible interpretations to all things, is inherent in the mind. In the totemistic age we reach the full idea of a freed soul, and certain organs, such as the heart, and more especially the blood, are thought to be the dwelling place of the soul. Such organs as the kidneys and the sex organs are often regarded as vehicles of the soul, and this connection of the soul with the sex organs may account for the origin of the phallic cults. This stage of development shows a great increase in the number of cults, many of these centring in the outstanding facts of human life, or in such natural phenomena as are of special interest to men. Ancestor worship also appears in this stage. Wundt, however, thinks that this marks the beginning of the dissolution of totemistic culture and the dawn of a new era, ancestor worship itself being the turning point or the transition to the age of the heroes and the gods.

In this age the hero is any person possessing power beyond the others, the general characteristic of the age being the predominance of the individual personality. There issues a progressive evaluation of personalities which in the end leads to the idea of gods, for the god is regarded as the hero of heroes; he is conceived as anthropomorphic in every respect, although more powerful than man. The God is created after the image of the hero and his creation is due to the effort to exalt human personality into the superhuman. Wundt does not make any suggestion as to whence man gets his idea of the superhuman. It must have had a place somewhere in his being for him to have made the effort to exalt human personality to anything beyond the human. Here then, according to Wundt, is the origin of the idea of God or gods. It springs out of the root of animistic thought in the primitive stage, the spirits of that age developing into the hero of a later age, and the hero growing into the god by the same process. We are entitled to ask why the hero transcends this world and becomes a god? Since the whole process takes place on the plane of this world and within the limits of human experience, why should there dawn the conception of anything superhuman? It needs some urge in the mind that carries it out beyond the limits of the world of perceptible things. Wundt's theory demands some such fact as the kinship of the spirit of man to the Spirit of God, which we have advocated throughout our study of these questions. To Wundt the idea of God differs from that of the hero in essential, qualitative elements, especially in the power to interfere with the course of nature and of human

life. What we have, then, in the idea of God, is a fusion of the hero with the spirits, or demons, of the primitive stage. In the hero the spirit of the animistic stage becomes a fully personal being, and through the enhancement of the qualities of the hero, the hero himself is elevated into the sphere of the superhuman and so becomes a god. With the rise of the god idea a new epoch of religious development begins, and this is the age of religion in the narrow sense of the term. In the final issue, Wundt argues that the gods are created by the religious emotions which find expression in the cult, for the elevation of the gods into ideal beings is largely the work of the cult, through the influence of the emotions associated with it. The cult not only expresses religious emotions; it moulds them. In the emotional excitement of the great festivals religious ideas become exalted and new ideas are formed. So it is in the cultus that the ideas of deity first attain their full significance, and these are largely projections of the emotions. In the same way the ideas of God as Father, Creator, and Moral Governor arise. Finally the conception of Saviour or Redeemer is reached, and, as Wundt admits, in the struggle for religious supremacy "the redeeming gods are those who have triumphed."

In making the idea of God and its subsequent development arise, in the final issue, from the emotional excitement of the cult practices, Wundt comes into line with the views of Durkheim.

We may say with regard to these views that they assume more than they prove. We have seen how in Wundt's case the superhuman realm is presupposed before man in the totemistic age exalts the

spirits of ancestors, and later in the hero age, when the hero is exalted into super-personality and becomes a god. In like manner, Durkheim assumes the conception of the "sacred" in the group before events and personalities are exalted to that sphere by the excitement of the cult practices.

(b) Leuba has made what is probably the most thorough and detailed study of the rise of religious ideas in his volume entitled *A Psychological Study of Religion*.<sup>1</sup> In the "Preface" he states that psychologists are not really concerned with belief, for the function of psychology is "to try and get at the psychological processes involved in the experience called salvation," and to reach what is fundamental in human nature. He does not, however, remain true to this point of view for he deals at length with the rise of beliefs and religious ideas, and in the closing chapters he claims the whole field of theology as belonging to the sphere of psychological research. In his treatment of the origin and development of religious ideas, he begins by examining the rise of the idea of Impersonal Powers. Here he considers the views of Tylor, Marett, and Brunton, giving special attention to the position of Brunton that the hidden, mysterious power with which the world is filled for primitive man "is at first expressed in terms denoting an infinite will," and that this world soul, as it may be called, is first posited in ecstasy or trance. At first it is vague, bordering on the impersonal, but it gradually gets differentiated and personified. Leuba is not prepared to accept this position, even though Marett supports it to the

<sup>1</sup> He covers much the same ground in a small volume published later and entitled *The Psychological Origin and Nature of Religion*

extent of recognizing that this vague power is mainly regarded as will. He himself holds that there is a belief in non-personal powers which is prior to and independent of animism. He examines the child's earliest reactions to the world and admits that in all the child's inquiry into causes, the idea of power is implied, but the child does not regard it as personal power, for he is not capable of rising to the idea of persons. The idea of Causation itself arises through the projection of the feeling of effort which we have in following the decision to exercise the will. But he believes that there is a class of causes into which no will effort is projected and that this class arises first. This position is contrary to the findings of Piaget and Clavier which we have considered earlier in this chapter. Leuba goes further and holds that even a cause conceived under the analogy of a will effort is not necessarily a personal cause. On this basis he concludes that the mysterious powers which are felt to people the world are not necessarily personal. It is sufficient to think of them merely as dynamic, able to do things. He suggests that this is the view that develops into magic, whereas the notion of personal powers leads to religion. The transition from the idea of impersonal to personal powers is the work of geniuses in the social group. He admits that dreams, hallucinations and striking events may make their contribution, but the prevailing urge is the effort to explain. So the idea of a creator or maker comes, and this may arise even when there is still a belief in a crowd of spirits and ghosts. The idea of a Great Father may also be held together with a belief in other superhuman spirits, in which case He is only the

highest God. "These beliefs are neither the manifestations of a diseased mind, nor the outcome of revelation. They arise from purely normal mental processes." The belief in the existence of invisible beings does not lead to the rise of religion, for it is only when these beings become important factors in the struggle of life that they acquire religious significance and become real gods.

Now Leuba does not raise the question as to the source and ground of the tendency of the mind of the child and of primitive men to personify the facts and forces of nature and to interpret these in a personal sense. Nor does he discuss the basis of this urge towards the creation of things and the consequent idea of a Maker and Creator. He admits that this is present before the quest for understanding and explanation. Leuba thus leaves room for the psychological explanation which has been suggested earlier in this chapter, that these tendencies of the mind are of the nature of responses to an appeal from without, or to the pressure of reality in its impact on the mind. The idea of God and the various symbolic conceptions of His nature arise thus out of the secret and mysterious presence of God in the mind and spirit of man. They are really efforts at a fuller understanding of the reality that is beyond yet within man. They are meant to make more real and intimate the "beyond that is within." This is the explanation, indeed the only one that explains and is adequate to all the facts. It accounts more effectively for the development of the higher and more spiritual conceptions of God which are enshrined in the thought of Him as Moral Governor, Father, and most of all as Self-sacrificing Love.

Leuba is probably right in insisting that the element of power is the one most prominent in the primitive conception of God and that this issues in the idea of a Creator. He finds the ground for this position in the child mind, with its tendency to ascribe power to the facts that form his environment. He finds this power manifested most fully and effectively in his father, for to the child there is no limit to his father's power. In this way his father's personality becomes, for him, the reservoir of power and a centre of efficiency which knows no bounds. The idea of God as Creator of the world, with power adequate to the demands of the whole universe, is a projection of this Father image of the infantile period, a regression to an earlier phase of experience. So we come again to the mind's tendency to project and personify its own experience, as the efficient agent in the origin of the idea of God as Creator. In view of the fact, already mentioned, that Leuba does not face the question of the ground for this tendency of the mind, we may point out that the child's ascription of unlimited power to his father is based on the peculiar relationship in which he stands to him. He does not regard every man as able to do all things. Rather does he think of all other men as inferior to his father in this respect. It is *his* father who has such power, and he thinks of him in this way because there is some deep ground of common life existing between them. There is thus a prior fact to be taken into account in the case of the child and his father's power. In a similar way, as we have argued, there is some fact prior to the mind's tendency to read the powers and potencies of the world in a personal sense and to focus these in an

all powerful Creator. This prior fact is the peculiar relationship in which the mind of man stands to the mind or spirit that manifests itself in the world. But this relationship carries the mind forward, and will not allow it to rest satisfied in the conception of God as Creator. With the development of morality and the refinement of the moral sense in its perception of the ethical relationship of life in society, the same urge of the mind that finds power in the world of things and interprets it in a personal sense, finds ethical realities in its world and interprets these in a personal sense. Finally, it finds them focussed and grounded in a supreme Personality who is ethical, the ground and Governor of the Moral Universe. The ethical qualities which are ascribed to the gods, or to the one God where monotheism is reached, will depend of necessity on the standard of ethical culture reached by the worshippers, and there will be progress in the moralization of the conception. Such progress can be traced in Greek thought, but it is most clearly seen in the development of the conception of God in the literature of the Hebrew people as found in the Old Testament. The early conception of the Hebrew Yahweh makes it clear that the power element is the most prominent. Several facts may be adduced to prove this. Thus the first name for God in the Book of Genesis is "El-Shaddai," which means "The All Powerful One," and the generic name for God is derived from the root El or Elah which means strength, force, power. Moreover, the manifestations of Yahweh were always associated with power and mighty happenings, as may be seen in the events connected with the giving of the Law and the formation of the

Covenant at Sinai, and on many other occasions. There are ethical implications in the very idea of the Covenant, and the subsequent development of the idea of Yahweh proceeds along the line of drawing out more fully these ethical implications. This process reaches its crown in the great prophets of the eighth to the sixth centuries, when the conception of Yahweh, as an Ethical Personality who is the One and Only God, becomes firmly established in the thought of Israel. Now, we can believe that in this case again, the reaching out of the mind to ethical considerations and the progress of ethical thought are just the response which the ethical nature of man makes to the appeal of the Moral Reality present in the world. It must be admitted that society and communal life or group practices have an influence on this development, for the content of ethical judgments is determined by the society and the social heritage into which men are born. What they regard as right or wrong, as good or evil, depends very largely on the practices of the group and on the ideas that lie behind these. But this does not mean that the moral sense itself, with its "categorical imperative" and the consciousness of ethical values, is the product of the group life, derived from the customs and practices of the group. The moral consciousness is inherent in the nature of man, as a part of aspect of his self-conscious life, so that we find him everywhere with some dim realization that there is a right and a wrong. Moreover, this fact accounts for moral progress and the growth of higher conceptions of right and wrong, for such progress arises from the urge of this aspect of man's self-

consciousness. He does not derive his moral nature from his environment, but his environment takes on moral aspects and becomes open to moral evaluations because of the moral nature which is his through the presence in him of the Moral Reality which, in the final issue, is the Ethical Personality called God.

Along almost identical lines we find another development in the conception, in this case more definitely connected with the growth of the group life. As Wundt has shown, the clan chief tends to become, at a later stage, the tribal hero; and as the tribal life develops and becomes consolidated in the idea of a nation or a state, the hero becomes by stages the leader, and finally the King. This development is often fostered by conquest, for the leader in battle becomes the head of the conquered tribe, and with the establishment of a larger unit, he tends to become King. So we find ideas of sovereignty connected with the conception of God, and the nature of this sovereignty is reflected in the idea of God. If the sovereign be an oriental despot or an Egyptian tyrant, the conception of God becomes that of an arbitrary sovereign who guards jealously his dignity and punishes any breach of law, or the failure to observe the decorum due to his position and power. He thus becomes the potentate whose law must be obeyed, whose power is manifested in punitive energy and who is subject to petty displays of anger and jealousy. So to the ancient Greeks *hybris* the overweening self-assertion of man in relation to the gods, called forth the anger of Zeus, setting in motion the punitive energy of the gods; whilst to the Arab, and later to the Muslim, the only fitting attitude is

that of prostration before the awful majesty of Allah and absolute submission to His will.

In a somewhat similar way, from the growing moralization of the conception of God and the consequent legal idea of His relationship to men, we find the view that He is the judge who metes out justice to men, assigning them rewards and punishments according to their deeds. This conception is found among the Hebrews, one of the expressions used in the Old Testament for Yahweh being "The judge of all the earth." In the Psalms He is frequently said to "judge the poor with equity," and to "judge the world with righteousness." It will be evident that such conceptions are far removed from the primitive ideas which we have examined earlier in this chapter, and that they imply a considerable development in social, ethical and mental powers. But it is out of the soil of such ideas that the still higher conceptions grow. As long as the conception of the relations between God and man move on the physical level, as we find it in what is known as the "natural religions," there can be little progress towards the more highly spiritual conceptions of God. But when ethical considerations find a place in the relationship the possibilities of progress become greatly enhanced. So we find that the moral element present in the Hebrew idea of the Covenant relationship between Yahweh and His people made possible the subsequent development which reaches its goal in the ethical Monotheism of the sixth-century prophets. Thus it comes about that "whilst the nations around Israel, and even those of the Semitic stock, were sinking deeper and deeper into polytheism, Israel alone rose to higher

and higher ethical conceptions of Yahweh." As the crowning point of this process, we find the idea appearing of Yahweh as the Father, and Israel as His son. This stage presupposes the growth of family life in solidarity and affection. The conception of the spirits and the gods as ancestors of the clan or race is found early in the stage of ancestor-worship and Totemism, but here the relationship is purely a physical one, the tie being definitely the tie of blood. On a higher level we find a similar idea in the mythology of the Egyptian and Babylonian religions—for in Egyptian thought the King is regarded as an offspring of the god, whilst in the Babylonian mythology some of the blood of Marduk is put in man. Gomperz has shown that many of the nature myths that lie at the basis of the Olympian religion of Greece embody similar ideas. Probably many of the feasts of primitive religion, as well as some of the sacrificial meals of more developed religions, embody the idea of eating the god, thus renewing the ties of blood with him by actually partaking of blood sacrifices. The idea here is a development from the root of creatorship which is probably the first to develop in the primitive mind, as it does in the child mind. Where there is no knowledge of the facts and processes of reproduction, we find the idea that birth comes through spirit possession, or by the direct act of one of the departmental gods. It is not difficult to understand how, under such conditions, the conception of a tribal, or national Father could grow, and how from this the idea of a great Father might be reached. It requires great progress in ethical life and thought, as well as a clarifying of the conception of spiritual reality, before

the idea can be formed of a Father of Spirits, and of Fatherhood as a spiritual relationship that transcends the physical and pro-creative. This is the conception of Fatherhood which we find in the Old Testament. It is one of the points of profound difference between Yahweh and the gods of the nations, that He is never regarded as sexually differentiated. There is no trace of a female consort for Yahweh. The female deities found in the Old Testament are all foreign to Israel, imported by members of other nations. The relation between Yahweh as Father and Israel as son is thus never regarded as physical, and in the prophets, such as Hosea and the Unknown Prophet of the exile, it is a spiritual relationship through and through. If we ask how it was reached, we have to reply that it was the fruit of the prophetic consciousness, the discovery of men who were in closer relationship to, and enjoyed fuller harmony of spirit with, the Great Spirit of the world. They were so attuned to the Spirit of God that He was able to make a self-disclosure to them which led them to higher conceptions of His nature and character. In this way they saw dimly that the nature of God was self-giving and sacrificing Love, and, to use the words of Pringle-Pattison, "that there is a Saviour at the heart of the Universe." This development reaches its crown in the idea of the Fatherhood of God as we have it in the teaching, and most of all in the Person, of Jesus Christ. Now, as the discovery which the prophets made comes to them in the intimacies of fellowship with God, a fellowship which they regard as a response to an appeal from God, since He approaches and makes Himself known to them, so we may well believe that

at the very lowest stages, where the dim idea of a Fatherly relation dawns, it also is a self-disclosure of the Great Spirit to the mind that responds to His approach and appeal. This reaponse and the subsequent self-disclosure are possible through the kinship of the spirit of man with the Spirit of the Universe. So we may sum up the whole matter by saying that the conative urge of the mind leads to the conception of God as Creator, the outgoing of the moral consciousness issues in the idea of a Moral Being who is the ground and governor of the Moral Universe; the urge of the reason towards Unity results in the conception of One Supreme and Absolute Being; and finally, the urge of the affectional aspect of consciousness yields the idea of a Father who ever gives Himself in self-sacrificing Love.

CHAPTER V  
THE RISE OF RELIGIOUS IDEAS—  
(*Worship*)

IT is exceedingly difficult to reach definite conclusions as to the origin of worship and the cultus, for we have to find our way through a tangled mass of primitive practices, and choose a path amid a multitude of theories held by various psychologists and anthropologists. Moreover, the question is complicated by its relation to other problems connected with the early stages of religious development. Thus it has become involved in the discussions of the relation between magic and religion, so that the different theories regarding this relation have important reactions on the problems of the origin, motive, meaning, and purpose of the ceremonies and offerings of primitive worship. Again, the subject is complicated through its connection with the general question of the relation of individual and communal worship. Was primitive worship, from its earliest appearance, a social affair closely identified with the group life, or was there an individual religious reaction to the spirits or demons prior to, or contemporaneous with, the ceremonies and communal worship which were an expression of group religion?<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Karstan (*The Origins of Religion*) insists that "it was practical interest that originally induced man to draw near and enter into relations with the spiritual powers" . . . Primitive ritual is "essentially an expression of man's instinct of self-preservation, in other words of his desire to make existence as tolerable as possible." He points out that originally it was not an ethical relation, p. 201.

We cannot enter into a detailed examination of all these points, but we must at least attempt to find a path through them so as to make our way clear for the consideration of the essential factors in the situation.

(1) The problem of the relation of magic and religion bears on the question at two points. Considerable discussion has been carried on as to whether the ceremonies of the cultus and the whole system of worship originated within the sphere of magical practices ; and this involves the further question as to whether Magic preceded Religion or vice versa. With regard to the second question, we find a great diversity of views, such scholars as Sir J. G. Frazer, Wundt, Marett, Leuba, and Ames defending the position that magic was first, and that religious practices grew out of the soil of magical beliefs and practices. On the other hand, Andrew Lang, Jevons, and Robertson Smith incline to the view that religion is prior to magic, Jevons working out the thesis that magic is a degenerate development of religion. Pratt takes an intermediate position, holding that magic and religion originated at the same time and that they represent two different attitudes taken to the spirits as soon as the idea of spirits dawns. Marett, although he accepts the priority of magic, yet in some aspects of his thought seems to agree with Pratt.

Now it is an established fact that in the realm of magic fear is the only emotional reaction to the spirits, because the spirits are regarded as unfriendly or even antagonistic to man. It is characteristic of those who accept the priority of magic that they prefer to speak of " demons " rather than " spirits."

They treat them as evil or malignant spirits that must be warded off or placated, relations with whom are fenced around by endless taboos and restrictions. But if there are, as Marett suggests, elements of esteem and love in the pre-animistic stage, as expressive of different attitudes to the vague, unseen presences sensed in the impression of Mana, it would seem as if these attitudes would remain in the stage when these unseen presences had developed into definite spirits or personal beings. It would thus be more reasonable to believe that both originated at the same time, and we may suggest that magic is in essence the result of the attitude of dread, whilst religion is the expression of the attitude of respect, perhaps of love, to the unseen powers. Stratton<sup>1</sup> emphasises the fact that there are two types of personalities, the self-assertive and the self-depreciative, and that this division seems to be more radical and deep than any other, for it is found in every stage of culture and is characteristic of man wherever he is found. This distinction makes itself felt in religion and religious thought, for the self-assertive type makes for freedom and power, whilst the self-depreciative leads to predestinarian ideas or fatalism. William McDougall has noted the same distinction, but he speaks of positive self-feeling and negative self-feeling. Stratton seeks to show how these personal differences have influenced various aspects of religion, such as the ideas of the future life, but he has not applied these distinctions to the question of the origin of religion. It might, however, be suggested that the self-assertive type would naturally tend to the magical interpretation of

<sup>1</sup> *Psychology of the Religious Life*, chapter I, pp. 23 and 38.

things, whilst the self-depreciative would issue in a religious attitude of dependence. One of the points of difference between magic and religion is that magic is coercitive and attempts to use the spirits, whilst in religion man is submissive and desires to be used by the spirits. This difference of attitude undoubtedly holds at the stage when magic and religion have undergone a process of development. It is probably true in the very earliest forms. Although McDougall does not press the distinction, he does imply something of this kind, for he regards reverence, which is "the religious emotion par excellence," as compounded of wonder, fear, gratitude and negative self-feeling. Moreover, since gratitude is itself a blending of tender emotion and negative self-feeling, there is in the first religious attitude a strong element of negative feeling or dependence. The negative self-feeling is evoked by the sense of superior power, and this would correspond to the impression made by such a mysterious and pervading sense of presences as is implied in the conception of Mana. Further, McDougall<sup>1</sup> considers that primitive thought and religion, from the very earliest, kept separate the two classes of powers, the terrible and awe-inspiring on the one hand producing fear, whilst the kindly and beneficent on the other hand evoked gratitude and trust. He admits that the calamities of primitive life would attract attention and start questioning, so that they would become more prominent and outstanding facts in the experiences of men. For this reason fear would be the dominant attitude. But that the

<sup>1</sup> See for these points, *An Introduction to Social Psychology*, chapter V, pp. 121 f.

attitude to the kindly forces must have been as real as, or even more real than, that of the malignant powers, is clear from another fact which McDougall mentions, that the combinations of emotions and the attitudes involved in them, which have survival value have been those whose gods were regarded as kind and gracious. The future thus belonged to the good spirits and the religious attitude to them, rather than to the demons and spirits of magic.

(2) There is a similar diversity of opinion with regard to the relation of individual religion to the religious practices of the group or society as embodied in the cult. An influential school of psychologists including such men as Wundt, Durkheim, Lévy-Bruhl, Ames, and others, regard all religious ceremonies as springing out of the activities and habits of the group. On the other hand, the view that religion arises first in the individual before it becomes a social factor has the support of such scholars as Hocking, Pratt, William James, Selbie, Söderblom and Clement Webb; and from a somewhat different standpoint, Sir J. G. Frazer, Tiele, and Jevons.

It is clear that some kind of individual religion exists even at the stage when religion has come to be regarded as predominantly a social affair, for fetishism, and such facts as the presence of household gods and private rites prove this. Further, if the position taken in these lectures with regard to the origin and nature of religion is well grounded, it must be conceded that the religious attitude is essentially an individual experience, and that this is needed, in the final issue, to account for the rise and authority of the group religion. Granting, as we

must, that when we come into touch with religion in its earliest known forms, it is largely an affair of the group, its sanctions implicated and interwoven with the customs and practices of the group life, this does not mean that there was no religion before the group was formed. The question resolves itself into that of deciding whether man has that in his nature which enables him to sense unseen presences, or become susceptible to Mana, even in his isolation, before any group or clan life has developed : or whether the very impulse towards religion is the product of the group life, created and fostered by the habitual practices of the group. Most of those psychologists who regard religion itself as the expression of group life favour the second alternative. Thus Durkheim bases his position mainly on the theory that " Nature as such cannot inspire religious emotion " ;<sup>1</sup> that such emotion can only be stimulated by the ritual of the group, more especially in the emotional excitement of the group feasts and festivals. This implies that the sense of mystery and awe, or the vague sense of being alive in a world that is alive, could not be experienced by man before some social development has taken place. This is a position difficult to defend. All we know of savages to-day goes to suggest that they are more keenly alive to the subtle and mysterious forces of nature than those who dwell in more civilized and well ordered society. It is indeed among such people that we find the conception expressed by " Mana " and similar terms most strongly emphasized. It may be argued that this capacity to receive impressions from nature and natural phenomena is

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Pratt. *The Religious Consciousness*, chapter XII, p. 261.

not religion and that the utmost which it can yield is the sense of invisible presences, or of a vague life force indwelling all things, such as we get in Mana. To which we may reply that if the conception of Mana and man's attitude to it is not definitely religious, it is, as Marett has shown, the raw material of all religion, the plasm out of which both magic and religion develop. Moreover, if we are to judge from the impression which nature makes on civilized man, there are in this impression elements that are closely akin to religious emotions, aspects that show marked resemblances to a religious attitude. Beauty of landscape and the majestic revelations of natural forces produce a strange inwardness of feeling—a quietude of spirit, a humbling of mind and heart such as are only found in religious experience. These elements of feeling and attitude are experienced more definitely and profoundly in religion, but it is undoubtedly true that what is known as "Nature mysticism" borders on religious mysticism, and partakes of some of the moods and feelings that belong specifically to the sphere of religion.

Now, if we grant the position that man was a religious being before society and social institutions had developed, we have still to inquire as to the origin of worship; and the only adequate answer that we can give is that worship was involved in, and developed from, the very attitude which man takes to the mysterious forces that fill the world for him, and which grow to be the spirits and demons of a later stage of life. We have noted the fact which Professor Whitehead has emphasized that in the very constitution of man's nature as a living, rational

being, there is more than the impulse merely to live. There is also an urge to live well, and still more, to live better. It is in this impulse to live well, and even to live better, that we are to find the origin of worship. It is conceivable that man may live, barely live, by finding a *modus vivendi* and making terms with the material universe around him, just as an animal does. But if he is to live well; if his life is to grow better, he must somehow come to terms with the spiritual forces that surround his life, and make some working arrangement with the invisible presences from which he cannot escape. Such a working arrangement is the first attempt at worship and out of it all subsequent developments of worship grow. Just as early man must inevitably seek some understanding with other men who may dwell on the outskirts of his life, even though it be on the basis of hostility in which he has to regard them as potential enemies, so when he senses the invisible forces that surround him, he must make some terms with them. In the dim consciousness that it is worth while in the interest of some betterment of life which he cannot fully envisage, he seeks to please or gratify them. Some mode of converse with these presences has to be established, and this is worship. He will try to converse with them and ask gifts of them. In these approaches we have a dawning realization of the meaning of prayer. In this way we should find, before a cultus was formed or clan life had developed, the prototypes of the various sacrifices or prayers which are found in the primitive cults that are known to students to-day. The position here stated is supported, in the main, by many of the leading students of Comparative Religion, as well as

by many of the leading psychologists. It must lie in the power of each individual, in view of this permanent possibility or capacity of religion, to give a religious interpretation to these spiritual entities, and this would constitute the basis for a response to them that may be regarded as the incipient stage of worship. Thus man's response to the appeal of the spiritual presences which surround him, is one that carries at its heart the very impulse from which worship springs.

Tylor holds that it was primitive man's own inner spiritual life, or his soul, that gave him the clue to the interpretation of the forces of the universe as personal beings or spirits. Jevons believes that worship springs from "an original sentiment native to the mind; underived from experience and a given datum of consciousness." It is "prior to and even contradictory of experience."<sup>1</sup> William James after his examination of "The Varieties of Religious Experience," concludes "that there is in the human consciousness a sense of reality, a feeling of objective presence, a perception of what we may call "something there," more deep and original than any of the special and particular senses. It will be noted how close to the basal impulses and experiences of life James regards this element of consciousness as lying, for he speaks of it as a "sense," a "perception" and a "feeling." Later, he speaks of men who "possess the object of their belief, not in the form of conceptions, but rather in the form of quasi-sensible realities directly apprehended," and "the unreasoned and immediate

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Ames. *The Psychology of Religious Experience*, chapter IV, p. 53.

assurance is the deep thing in us." James insists that this experience has reality because it produces results in men, for "the transmundane realities produce effects." Now what James has here found regarding religion in its more developed form, must apply in an incipient form to all religious experience, even the most primitive. It is through the dim sense or perception that he has some business with the unseen realities that encircle his life that primitive man is led to make offerings to these unseen presences with whom his life is continuous, or to make appeals to them and seek converse with them. Tiele is prepared to defend the position that the cult and all religious ceremonies are based on, and derived from, "a sentiment of kinship in man to the super-human powers and a sense of dependence on them," whilst Pratt argues that all ceremonies owe their origin to two distinct influences, a social sense in man, and the feeling or sense of powers or presences. He insists that the cult activities are observed, not merely because society insists, but because individuals find them profitable in their immediate effect on them. These activities give pleasure in affording an opportunity for self-expression, and they reinforce religious emotions, for through them the beliefs lying behind such practices are kept vivid and real; religious emotion is stimulated and deepened. In addition to these more personal and individual values, they have a social value in yielding a sense of solidarity, binding the group together in a profound emotional experience.<sup>1</sup> Hocking thinks that worship is instinctive and that it is an effort to enter into communication, or to transact some business

<sup>1</sup> Pratt. *The Religious Consciousness*, chapters XII and XIII, pp. 255 f.

with God—or, presumably, with the spirits in the primitive stage. “Worship is the provision which the spiritual constitution of man has made for its own perpetual amendment . . . a spontaneous impulse for spiritual self-preservation and for the perpetual renewal of the worth of life.”<sup>1</sup> These weighty words of Hocking go to the heart of the matter and they apply not only to worship in the more developed stages of religious life, but also to the very earliest stages of religion. Worship is born in the urge for fuller and better life and is a means of acquiring this better life. Selbie agrees that worship is instinctive for he speaks of prayer as “the instinctive turning to the powers that be for help” . . . “the expression of a nature that must so express itself, and it witnesses in the clearest fashion to the religious functioning of the primitive instincts of the race.” Behind worship there are, according to Selbie, two assumptions (*a*) The belief in the existence of powers able to help or harm, and (*b*) the belief that it is possible to approach these powers and that there is a proper way of doing this.<sup>2</sup> This reference to belief brings us to the third question on which we must touch briefly.

(3) Burnett, as we have seen, expresses the opinion that there are no ideas or beliefs in the earliest form of religion, and Ames opposes what he calls the “intellectualist view” of Crawley when he seeks for ideas behind taboos. Ames himself contends for the position that the earliest religious activities are purely emotional and that ideas develop later, out of the intense emotional excitement generated in the

<sup>1</sup> *The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, chapters XXIV and XXV.

<sup>2</sup> *Psychology of Religion*, chapter XI, pp. 207 f.

religious feasts. This, however, is a position difficult to make good, for there must, at least, be a belief in, or a vague sense of, the existence of superhuman beings before any attempt is made to seek an understanding with them or to treat with them in any way. So much belief is absolutely necessary if there is to be anything to which the name of worship or ceremony can be applied. It may be readily granted that the predominant element in this vague sense of unseen presences is emotional, a kind of feeling that some vital force is moving around. It seems to belong to the intuitional side of man's mental equipment since it enables him to "intuit"—if we may use a word of Rivers—these subtle forces in his environment. But there must be more than mere emotion present in the earliest stages, for there is involved an "awareness," and a conative urge in relation to these forces. At a later stage, when man seeks to initiate some activity in relation to these, there must certainly be present the belief that these presences are real and that they will understand what is done, or appreciate the attitude taken and respond to it. If we regard "ideas" as clear-cut and definite in content, or think of "belief" as well defined articles of faith, we cannot attribute such ideas or beliefs to primitive man. On no question—not even on such a question as that of suitable material for food—could he have such definite ideas, and certainly he could not have them with regard to the vague influences and forces that represented for him the unseen world. All his views regarding these would be crude, vague, fragmentary, and what beliefs he had must have been in a fluid and uncertain state. But we may safely infer that he

believed them to exist ; otherwise we cannot explain his fear of them, nor yet his efforts to get on good terms with them. When we reach the stage when he regards these presences as spirits, especially at the stage known as that of the "freed soul," when the spirit may exist apart from any object, his belief in their reality may be stronger and more defined. Moreover, at a slightly later stage he accepts, without questioning, the fact that the spirit of his dead friend or relative exists after death, so that it can come and share in the feast offered to the dead, or become an object of worship, as we find in ancestor-worship. There are here a set of clearly defined and generally accepted ideas and beliefs, but these are based upon and derived from the earlier vague consciousness of the real existence of the forces of the unseen world, and they are but more developed forms of this earlier shadowy faith. We must regard it as a minimum belief of primitive man that he accepted the existence of the spiritual forces which he intuited around him, as real, and on this minimum faith he moved on to address or enter into relation with these forces or beings. All worship, in every phase of it, implies such a faith and grows out of it. It is indeed the basal assumption without which it is impossible to find any motive for worship or any meaning in the various ceremonies of the cult.

We may sum up the points already discussed by referring to the words of the late Archbishop Nathan Söderblom in his "Gifford Lectures."<sup>1</sup>

"Religion must exist and rise up in the soul of man prior to finding expression in his words and

<sup>1</sup> *The Living God*, Basal Forms of Personal Religion, 1933. Lecture 1, pp. 1-2 ; 16 ; 18 ; 20.

deeds, customs and institutions. It must be found in the individual before it becomes the concern of the community . . . a beginning is inconceivable which does not issue from the reaction of the individual to things, events and existence. A science which makes the community *all*, ignoring the individual, may seem to the sober judgment of a latter time just as mythological and fantastic as primitive thought. Religion has been conceived as an anonymous mass-product. Its beginning, to be sure, was anonymous; but a mass as such is never creative. It is comprised of individuals. Taboo rules, commandments enjoining holiness, fear of the powers and communion with them are not . . . produced by the mass or the community. Take any mass-movement whatever, either in history or in our own time. Closer examination reveals that it had its origin in an individual or in individuals. The fire was kindled in a soul or in several souls, until the flames spread all round . . . even in pre-historic times we have to reckon with men, yes, with important individuals. If we want to study the essence and elementary forms of religion, we must study the soul life of the individual."

Later, in the same lecture, he insists that "'Mana' among the races of the South Seas and 'Orenda' among the North American Indians, are manifested in the physical and spiritual qualifications of a person. But they are traced to the spirits."

Rafael Karsten has pointed out that "this mana . . . cannot be regarded as simply an impersonal stuff scattered about the world." "It is frequently, perhaps usually, to be traced to personal spirit-powers. . . . These expressions . . . denote a quality

and a *supernatural fellowship* rather than a kind of impersonal fluid."

Still later Archbishop Söderblom says, "Judging from the practices and statements of those concerned, one might be tempted to make the difference between those who have been called by spirits and those who have procured power by measures of their own, coincide with the difference between religion and magic. In the former case it is man who submits to the deity and obeys it. In the latter man makes himself lord of the powers and employs them for his own purposes." He quotes, with approval, the words of Jevons to the effect that "Magic . . . is in two ways the negation of religion and necessarily incurs its hostility."

Finally he says, "It is evident that man could not (a) give to such phenomena a place apart, nor (b) surround them with taboo rules, if man had not a priori in himself a *disposition for the supernatural, an inner kinship with a superhuman reality which is dimly reflected in the mind of man, in his customs and life. . . .*<sup>1</sup> Thus we have found among primitive people a consciousness of divine action."

We can now proceed to a consideration of the psychological factors in early worship.

## A. PRAYER

Heiler in *Das Gebet*<sup>2</sup> maintains that "the need which impels to prayer within the primitive world is for the most part not the need of the individual, but

<sup>1</sup> The italics are mine.

<sup>2</sup> Translated under the title *Prayer* by S. McComb, 1932, chapter I, pp 2 f.

of an entire group," and that "it is thus not the individual who prays, but a group of individuals socially bound together." But he insists also "that individual prayer, which a single person utters in his need, though subordinate in primitive tribes to collective prayer, is almost nowhere wanting."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, although the question of priority cannot be answered with certainty, "still it is probable that the prayer of individuals in personal need is older than the formless and irregular prayer of the group." "The prayer of the group goes back in the long run to a praying individual, for indeed it has always been an individual who first uttered a cry which the entire group spontaneously took up." Further, he holds that prayer is the free creation of the moment, an independent act on the part of the worshipper, and it exists first in the group in this free, direct form before it becomes definite and set. It is found in this free, direct and spontaneous form among the peoples of the lowest culture known to ethnology in these days, such as the Pygmies and allied tribes, with whom it is the sole type of prayer. He thinks it probable that no tribe on earth is without this free, direct prayer. "The free, spontaneous, petitionary prayer of the natural man exhibits the prototype of all prayer. It is an echo of that primitive prayer which once—when and how we know not—broke from the lips of prehistoric man and opened devotional communion

<sup>1</sup> Karstan insists that "from a psychological point of view we may assume that there was a time in the history of men when dealing with . . . the spiritual powers, he did not resort . . . to ritual activity in the form of offerings and prayers." It was simply spontaneous action as in the case of animals running away from danger. *The Origins of Religion*, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

between him and the divinity . . . we grasp it in its purest form in the prayer of primitive man." What does psychology tell us of its origin? It cannot take us back to the actual beginnings of prayer—no science or historical research can do this—but it can help us to understand the motives and needs that led to prayer; to detect the impulses and the movements of the spirit of man in its search for companionship and its desire for establishing an understanding with the beings or being that surround—may we not say "haunt"?—man from his earliest appearance. This can take us some way towards the solution of our problem and lead us a little distance into the heart of prayer itself. This task we must now attempt.

Ames points out that the subject of prayer among primitive peoples has received very little consideration by scholars in the field of the Comparative Study of Religion. They deal at considerable length with sacrifice, its origin and meaning, but rarely refer to prayer. Yet the practice of prayer must have been at least as widespread as that of sacrifice. Moreover, it must represent some factor in the religious life and experience that is more basal than sacrifice,—at any rate, in the form of external sacrifices and offerings,—for when these are transcended or fall into abeyance, prayer continues to be offered. It remains the most effective means of personal communion with God in the more ethical and spiritual religions of the highest civilizations. We may also say that prayer as individual communion, or as personal petition, must have preceded sacrifices, since sacrifices, even when they are individual and personal offerings presuppose a

more developed range of ideas than prayer. On the other hand, prayer may become, and does become in the most exalted moments of spiritual life, an offering of the self in which the deepest meaning of sacrifice is realized. It is the "laying of the self on the altar" as a "living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." Heiler has indicated another interesting fact, that as the practice of offering sacrifices grows and becomes more elaborately organized as a part of the cultus, there is a tendency for one type of prayer—the prayer of thanksgiving—to cease.

Both prayer and sacrifice are born in the spontaneous and instinctive impulses of human nature, but in these impulses as modified by the higher elements involved in human self-consciousness. They cannot be derived from the instinctive nature of man in its purely animal state, for the purely animal instincts do not prompt the animals to bow in worship or to offer sacrifices. These acts are only found on the human level. If there are beings higher than man, we cannot tell what attitude they may take to the supernatural factors in the universe, but we may infer that if they worship or offer prayers and sacrifices, it will be with still richer meaning and more spiritual reality than is possible to man. We know, however, that prayer can have no meaning to the sub-human creation, and that, therefore, the impulse to it belongs not to the instincts as such, but to that element in man's nature that lifts him above the animals. That this is so is evident from another fact, that prayer implies an idea or conviction of the existence of the superhuman beings with whom communion is sought and to whom the petitions are presented. We have already dealt with this point

at some length, but if further confirmation is needed we may quote Heiler who declares<sup>1</sup> that "faith in the existence of supernatural . . . beings must be already provided, before man . . . enters into relation with these beings by invoking them in prayer." "Or to use religious language, God must have revealed Himself to man, before man, on his side, comes to Him ; God Himself must open up intercourse with humanity." Heiler then adds : "Man must, therefore, already possess an idea of God. The feeling of weakness and dependence awakened in distress can only raise this idea to a firm conviction, it cannot evoke it out of nothing." This is, then, a primary assumption and we may state definitely that without this incipient faith or implicit belief prayer could not arise. Moreover, it is in this faith that prayer lives, for if man were convinced that no superhuman being existed, prayer would not long survive. The practice would wither at the root, so intimately does its life depend on the belief in the reality of the Being it invokes. Beginning with this belief as a basic assumption, even in the earliest forms, what can we learn from psychology as to the origin and meaning of prayer? There are, generally speaking, two fundamental positions taken by psychologists on the question of origin which we find it impossible to accept.

(1) In the first place, many psychologists suggest or imply that prayer has developed out of magical spells or incantations.<sup>2</sup> This position is taken by

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Marett expresses some doubt on this point, and in some passages seems to contend against it. We should probably regard him as on the whole against it. Karstan rejects the priority of spell holding that in most cases prayers become stereotyped into spells, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

almost all the scholars who regard magic as arising before religion. There is no doubt that the spell does hold a prominent place among the earliest magical practices and that later certain aspects and ideas connected with spells have a place in prayers, more especially when prayers become set and stereotyped as the utterance of group needs and social desires. The position which regards spells as the earliest form of petition to the superhuman powers, and as thus preceding prayers, can only be maintained if we are prepared to grant that magic precedes religion. If, however, as we have sought to show, there is ground for holding that they arise simultaneously and represent different attitudes towards the superhuman powers from the very beginning, then the contention which derives prayer from spells can scarcely be maintained. Further, there is a strong probability that prayer precedes spell. Before a spell can be thought of as powerful and capable of producing effects or of influencing the superhuman beings, there must have grown the conception of what is known as the "power of the word." Man must believe that the uttered word carries potency through its very utterance. This potency attaches most to the name of a person. For this reason primitive peoples will refrain from uttering the name of a dead ancestor—or of a spirit or ghost—since the very utterance of the name sets going a current of influence from the person or spirit named. The conception is found almost wholly within the sphere of magical practices and ideas. But it is certain that the very conception of such a potency attaching to words could only arise after a considerable development had taken place ;

when man had reached a stage when a certain amount of abstraction or abstract thinking was possible to him. In other words, he must have passed beyond the primitive stage. But we may well believe that before this he sought intercourse and some mode of converse or understanding with the strange powers that were all around him, and which he inevitably conceived as possessing some such being as his own on the analogy of his own efficiency and power. At a later stage when the idea of the power of the spoken word became established, this conception did have an effect on the practice of prayer. In the close inter-actions and inter-relations of religion and magic in the early stages, this was inevitable. So we find that in the set forms of prayer in which the group or clan expressed its petitions and needs the idea prevails that the very words have potency and for that reason the exact form of words must be used. Further, the conception is reached that there is benefit to be derived through the mere repetition of short formulae and phrases, and that certain mystic words have power to charm or ward off some of the spirits that encompass man's life. We cannot accept the suggestion of Ames that the whole idea underlying the practice of intercessory prayer is that of the power of words.<sup>1</sup> But there is no doubt that such an idea did creep into the prayers of man at an early stage, though not at the very earliest stage. We,

<sup>1</sup> Marett also suggests that intercessory prayers are based on the idea of compelling the spirits.

Karstan thinks that at the lowest stage prayer is a magical means of controlling the spirits for motives of self-interest. *Op. cit.*, p. 269. He maintains that "in its original form prayer is nothing more than a request directed to supernatural beings with a view to making them do the wishes of man."

therefore, find it impossible to acquiesce in the dictum of Ames that "the earliest prayers were charms operating magically."<sup>1</sup>

(2) The second assumption against which we protest has been more widely accepted than the one just considered. It is that the earliest prayers were petitions for help and the satisfaction of immediate needs. Leuba insists very strongly on this point and Ames is scarcely less emphatic, for he declares that in the earliest prayers there are no traces of any desire for spiritual blessings. They are purely petitions for utilitarian and immediate needs, for food and the help of the spirits in the fierce struggle for life. Heiler<sup>2</sup> also accepts this position in general for he says: "A momentary, concrete, immediate need in which the primary interests of life, either of the individual or the group, are threatened—this forms the original incitement to prayer." "Famine and drought, danger to life, . . . disease and pestilence . . . urge primitive man with fervid force to pray to higher beings. Momentary . . . emotional states of high intensity, such as fear, vexation, wrath, hate, sorrow, worry, are the psychic experiences produced by such situations and act as motives of prayer. . . . The consciousness of absolute weakness, of complete dependence on higher, mightier beings . . . pervades the entire life of primitive man. In the moment of danger and need it awakens to a vitality hitherto non-existent. The connection between the feeling of dependence and self-asserting effort gives birth to hope. . . . Fear, therefore, may be described as the impelling, and

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> *Prayer*, p. 2.

hope as the releasing motive of prayer." Later, in the same chapter, when he deals more fully with the motives and forms of prayer, Heiler admits that "although primarily designed as means to persuade and win over the higher powers, another element . . . appears, transcending what is merely materialistic and egoistic, namely, reverence, admiration, humility and confidence." He thinks these represent two fundamental feelings of religion—one expressive of the feeling of dependence and the other that of trust. So "among the petitionary prayers of primitive man we catch notes of a higher and purer piety which, at first, surprise us. But they testify to the presence even in the prayers of primitive man of those deep religious feelings which, although unuttered, underlie all prayers and all religious acts; humility and trust!"

There is no doubt that Heiler, in these later quotations, touches on an important fact in connection with primitive prayer and one that has intimate bearing on the question of origin. We need not question the place of immediate needs and material satisfactions as motives in such prayers. Life to early man must have been so constant a warfare, so unbroken a struggle, that he was prepared to ask help of any power that he felt to be near him, more especially if that power were regarded, as spirits were in general, as greater than he. The pressure of hunger, and the danger from storm or wild beast, would lead him to make such endeavours as he could to enlist the help of such reinforcements as he knew. The prevailing motive would be need and the more usual form of his prayers would, therefore, be petitionary, for that which satisfied his needs or

offered protection against immediate dangers.<sup>1</sup> But if, as we have argued, there is present from the first more than fear of the spirits, and if such elements as admiration, trust, and even love, are found in his attitude to the spirits, must there not have been another motive and another type of prayer from the very earliest time? May there not have been a desire for fellowship with the spirits whom early man trusted? If he sensed some of the spirits as friendly and gracious would he not seek for something like communion with them in the time of his loneliness? Surely there would be the urge to know more of these spirits and powers whom he trusted and admired. To acquire this fuller knowledge he would seek to converse with them, telling out his trouble, not merely to ask for help, but to gain sympathetic fellowship and find some being who would understand. We must not read too much into such fellowship, nor must we regard the communion thus attained as approaching the lofty spiritual intimacies of the higher religions. But the attitude from which these lofty spiritual intimacies grow and on which they are based, must have had a prototype in the earliest prayer life of humanity. If, as we have sought to prove, religion is a relation of trust and committal to the gods, there is an antecedent presumption that such an attitude of fellowship and personal communion would develop.

Leuba<sup>2</sup> in discussing the "origin of magical and religious practices" enunciates certain principles of explanation which lead us a little way towards

<sup>1</sup> Freud says that in prayer man has "a direct influence on the divine will and in that way insures for himself a share in the divine omnipotence."  
"New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis," Lecture 35, p. 210.

<sup>2</sup> *The Psychological Study of Religion*, chapter VIII, pp. 156 f.

understanding the situation, and although we cannot accept the conclusions which he reaches, we may accept some of these basic principles. Thus in seeking to account for the origin of taboo, he pushes his explanation back in part, to the impulse found in children to amuse themselves by making prohibitions and backing them up with threats. In other words, he accounts for them by an element that is implicit and spontaneous in child nature. Further, he explains the practice of making vows by referring it to an "original impulse of human nature to try and avoid evil and get good by promising to do something." Finally, he regards other types of practice as originating in the spontaneous response of the organism to specific situations. He instances such facts as the tendency of man in a state of excitement to give vent to his feelings in movements, such as dancing and grinding the teeth; and again he appeals to children and their spontaneous impulse to regard and treat all things as living and to speak to them, carrying on an imaginary conversation which involves an element of personification and projection. We can scarcely doubt that these principles have been operative, and that they account for many magical and some religious practices. Leuba, however, does not apply his principles to the origin of prayer, but they may be so applied. Thus the spontaneous, and apparently universal impulse of children to treat all things—animate and inanimate alike,—as living, and to seek conversation with them, is the same impulse as we have appealed to above as prompting primitive man to seek communion and open up connection with the powers that dwell around him. Ames suggests that prayer

originates in the almost involuntary impulse in man to express his feelings in expletive and explosive words, such as a groan when in pain, or a yell when he is successful. It is difficult to understand how such involuntary utterances could develop into prayer, either in the form of petition or of conversation. But the impulse to utter one's feelings to some person, real or imaginary, as is the case with children, or to open up conversation with a person or presence felt to be near, does give us a ground for the development of prayer. The habit of conversing with oneself is one in which man often indulges, and in all cases it involves a process of more or less complete personification. There is always an imaginary person with whom the conversation is carried on, even though this may not be explicit. With children this is very much more prominent. If, then, with Leuba, we are to seek a clue to the rise of religious practices in the impulses of child nature, this impulse gives us a more satisfactory explanation of the aspect of prayer we are now considering than any other. In addition, then, to petitions for specific benefits from the spirits there would also be the impulse to converse with them as real persons, able to understand and appreciate what was spoken to them. This would be the incipient and very fragmentary prototype of the communion which, at its highest, is a delight and joy in the fellowship of the Eternal God.

There are still other important factors in connection with the origin of prayer, such elements as surrender and thanksgiving. Leuba, in the chapter already quoted, criticizes the two principles which Sir J. G. Frazer applies to magic, the law of Similarity

and the law of Contagion, and then introduces the principle of will effort, or what he calls "will magic." He gives as instances of this the "firm resolve" of a Buddhist monk and the practice found in certain primitive communities during war time, when the women folk of the community will imitate the actions of men in battle, in some cases waving their fans and crying "O bullet hit the enemy." The essence of such will magic, he thinks, is the belief that the exertion of the will can take effect at a distance. Such practices, however, are capable of another explanation and may be taken as signifying something quite different. If we grant that it is based on the idea that an effort of the will can take effect at a distance, we must probably add that it is thought able to do so because of the presence of the subtle reality conceived as Mana which links all things together into a mysterious unity of life. In other words, it is regarded as operative through the medium of the unseen presences or spirits which constitute for primitive man the unseen world. Some such idea of a medium which links all things together, so that power may be transmitted from one place to another, is implied in the practices already mentioned. On this basis we may suggest that what really takes place is that the effort of will put forth in these practices is regarded as given to the spirits that they may convey and impart it to the warriors who are actually fighting the battles. Or, in the case of the Buddhist monk, that his "firm resolve" adds power to the spirit world so that his purpose may be achieved. In other words, what is here found is a surrender of self in its will power to the spirits. In the cases

instanced this is done on behalf of others, so that translated into the realm of prayer, we have here a species of intercessory prayer. The point we are now emphasizing, however, is the fact that there is a surrender of some element of the self to the spirits or gods, and here we touch on another aspect of prayer. No one will doubt that at its highest prayer ceases to be a matter of asking and receiving gifts. There is a stage reached in the prayer life when it transcends even the joy of fellowship and communion and becomes an offering of the self to God, the laying of the self on the altar that He may use the self thus offered and energize through it to do His Will. This is the noblest form and the highest meaning of prayer, and it gets its first utterance in this offer of the will power to the spirits, in the element of surrender which that implies. Such a surrender would only be possible to spirits regarded as friendly, spirits in whom primitive man had trust and confidence. Fear would inhibit anything in the nature of self-giving. But in the very trust in the friendly spirits there is an element of self-giving and surrender. This must have had some place and been a real factor in primitive prayer.

Finally, there is the prayer of thanksgiving. If there were, as is acknowledged by Marett and others, such feelings as admiration, trust, gratitude, and even love in the pre-animistic stage, and if, as we have insisted, there was a sense of the presence of friendly as well as unfriendly powers, then we need not hesitate to affirm that something in the nature of thanksgiving as the utterance of gratitude would have a place in man's relationship to these powers. It is probably true that we have to find the origin of

sacrifice in this feeling of gratitude, although other ideas may grow around the practice of sacrificing which modify the form and procedure, even obscuring the primary impulse. There must, however, have been present to primitive man, even before any sacrifices were attempted, the attitude of mind and the impulse involved in gratitude which would prompt to thanksgiving. In reality it might be argued, from the higher spiritual level of subsequent days, that the very impulse is itself an incipient prayer, and that even though it should not come to utterance in actual words or actions, it achieves spiritual results both in the experience of the person who feels it and in the larger spiritual world. We may well believe that there is an understanding of this impulse and a response to it on the part of the Eternal Spirit whose presence was sensed in the far-off past as the vague powers that surround life. This faith lies at the root of such modern practices as silent prayer, the voiceless worship of the Society of Friends and the "Fellowship of Silence." From another point of view, it finds exemplification in the "absorption" of the Yoga devotee and the contemplation of the mystic, or the "theoria" of the ancient philosophers. Primitive man could not rise to such a lofty conception of the meaning and potency of his feeling and gratitude, or of the attitude of his spirit towards the spirits involved in this. But if the modern practice has any ground in reality, we may, at least, believe that it was true in the first silent attitude or posture of the grateful spirit of man. Wundt<sup>1</sup> thinks that in the earliest practices of the cult there were only two forms of prayer, the peti-

<sup>1</sup> *Folk Psychology*, chapter III, section 16, pp. 426-432.

tionary and the thanksgiving, but that later there grew a third form, the penitential prayer. This he regards as the "most mature form of prayer." The prayer of thanksgiving has a tendency to pass into a song and from this hymns are derived. These songs become associated later with the penitential prayers, thus developing into penitential psalms. Such a development as Wundt here describes can only have taken place at a stage that is far removed from the primitive. But we may infer that the prayer of thanksgiving of the later period had its prototype in the attitude, or the vague expression of gratitude, to the cosmic presences that sprang forth from the heart of primitive man. Heiler<sup>1</sup> points to the fact that primitive languages seem to have no word that means "to thank," and that even in the rich vocabulary of the oldest Veda—the Rigveda—this holds true. This fact has given rise to the idea that a feeling of gratitude is lacking among primitive peoples and less civilized tribes, and this is made the ground for asserting that prayers of thanksgiving have no place in their vague and indefinite relations to the powers and spirits. Heiler is prepared to admit with Schurtz that "the giving of thanks as an express form of intercourse is not a universal trait of humanity," but he points out that it is found as a social custom among many primitive peoples in widely different areas. It is beyond dispute that "the feeling of gratitude belongs to the primary social impulses which are peculiar to man as a social being and that this feeling is expressed in gesture, countenance, and speech." Moreover, the records bear witness to the fact that "the

<sup>1</sup> *Prayer*, p. 5 f.

emotion of joyful gratitude is among the motives of prayer," with primitive tribes of low culture. There is no doubt that petition is prior to thanksgiving, but when deliverance from some need or danger is secured, or when the success or good fortune prayed for is achieved, then the feeling of gratitude arises spontaneously. When the question is faced as to the recipient of the thanks we have to admit that it is not given to any other members of the group, but to the superhuman beings to whom the petitions have been made. We may surmise that in the isolated life of primitive man before a group was formed, the same would be true. "Primitive man was originally a hunter and gatherer of plants. In his search for food he had to trust his fortunate finds ; the consciousness of being wholly dependent on higher powers with regard to the satisfaction of the need for food is expressed most deeply by giving thanks for food," as well as for all the other successes or " finds " that come to him. Probably, as Heiler puts it, " the pure feeling of gratitude is mingled with a simple-minded eudaemonistic desire to insure the future favour of the god " through the expression of thanks. But there would most certainly be occasions when the gratitude would be unselfish and the thanksgiving sincere. It is certainly unsafe to infer that there is no gratitude among primitives because there is no definite word for " thanks " in early languages, for the feeling of gratitude and the attitude of thanksgiving may be present when there is no term through which to express it. We might argue on the same ground that because there is no specific word for sacrifice, there could not have been any sacrifice or sacrificial spirit. It is generally

admitted that the words used in the earliest languages for sacrifices mean simply "gifts."

Heiler when he examines the motives of prayer concludes that these are five, the sense of need, a wish for satisfaction, altruistic sympathy, gratitude, and ecstatic praise. It is evident that these can be reduced to the three which have been already discussed for the wish for satisfaction is inherent in, and inseparable from, the sense of need, and the ecstatic praise is but a developed form of the prayer of gratitude and thanksgiving. The altruistic sympathy motive is identical with the longing for communion and fellowship and the self-giving which this involves.

Now, whilst we have found these different motives and attitudes in primitive prayer it may also be stated that primitive man did not realize the meaning or understand to the full the impulse itself. It was the impulse that really mattered in that it prompted to the utterance of the need or the desire for fellowship and mutual understanding. The real ground was the experience itself, be it a sense of need, a desire for communion, or an impulse of gratitude. The impulse itself would be vague, and certainly early man could not see the end or full meaning of it as regards his life as a whole. The immediate situation and satisfaction would be central to his consciousness, and although there may be a dim peripheral consciousness of "something other" than the immediate satisfaction, this could only be vague, fragmentary and inchoate. We cannot suppose that the deeper meanings which we have found in his prayer would be present to him. But we may assert that these deeper meanings were

implicit from the first, and that the different attitudes were taken according as each specific situation arose. The impulse itself, arising from the inborn characteristics of human nature, would issue in the various attitudes, when the appropriate circumstances occurred.

Can we now say anything about the origin of ceremonies and rites? In so far as the impulse to make requests or give thanks was present, we may say that it bears within itself a tendency to activity. The very act of making petitions would entail some posture or attitude. There is present in every sense of need an element of negative self-feeling, to use McDougall's expression again, and this would lead to a deferential attitude, with a tendency to bow or assume the posture of a suppliant. Moreover, such a feeling and impulse are present whenever man is faced with an impressive manifestation of natural power or beauty. Watching the sunrise one summer morning on the top of Snowdon, when the sun slowly appeared in all its majesty, flooding the solitudes with golden light and making the vast silences vibrant with life and gladness, there stole into my soul an irresistible impulse to bow in adoration. I understood the appeal of Sun-worship. There came a strange bowing down of spirit and a subtle, reverent quietude of soul. Through the fact of ideo-motor activity there came also an appropriate posture. Similarly, in the feeling of gratitude there is an element of negative self-feeling implicit in the sense of being indebted to another, and this is enhanced when the other "is felt to be greater in power or authority, as is the case with the spirits of primitive life." But there is in this attitude an-

other element in the self-giving that is implicit in gratitude, a sense of power and a feeling of the value of the self which makes the attitude more complicated. There is not merely the cringing of the suppliant before a superior, but also the joyous consciousness of yielding something to the superior. These postures and attitudes would be prior to the rise of definite ceremonies and rites, but the later ceremonies would grow in the first instance from this primitive attitude of prayer. When social life developed and the group religion sought to express itself, other factors would become operative so that the ceremonies and rites would be moulded and governed by different forces. Most psychologists treat of worship at this stage of communal or group religion. This leads them to regard the various ceremonies of the cult as due to the influence of group customs and taboos. But something is needed to account for the rise of any religious custom or taboo. This is to be found, in the ultimate, in the experience of the individuals and their attitude to the unseen powers that form the borderland of their life. When these peripheral and marginal presences become focal to consciousness, there is an instinctive impulse to adopt an attitude towards them, and this is the basis of all subsequent developments in the cult. There is, however, no doubt that when religion becomes a group affair, other factors become operative, and some of the social customs and attitudes get transferred to religion.

Leuba,<sup>1</sup> in his treatment of this subject, deals at some length with the rise of magical practices. When he considers definitely religious practices and

<sup>1</sup> *A Psychological Study of Religion*, chapter VIII, pp. 151 f.

rites he suggests four sources from which these are derived. (a) He first mentions the transference of magical practices to religion, but these are few. (b) Most religious practices come through the transference of practices found useful in the realms of human intercourse to man's relations with the gods, for human relations are the prototype of man's intercourse with the gods. Now, it is clear that this position implies a considerable development of social life, and that it cannot therefore be regarded as primitive. (c) Leuba's third source is the extension to ghosts and gods of friendly offices to the dead practised in the group. This accounts for such ceremonies as funeral feasts and burial rites. Here, again, considerable development is implied, for such ideas could only become effective at the stage of ancestor-worship, which is several stages removed from the primitive and pre-animistic position. (d) The fourth factor is the influence of social customs, such as prostrating before a chief, or offering gifts to win favour. This demands a still greater measure of development. At the stage of social life and culture implied by Leuba, these factors have their influences, but they are themselves based upon and derived from impulses, or "propensities," as McDougall now prefers to call them, present and operative in human nature before the social group becomes organized or social customs are formed. They are, in fact, extensions of the impulses and attitudes of primitive prayer. At the same time, it must be admitted that with the growth of group life and the cohesion of the community, the practices and amenities of group life, as well as the binding customs of society, tell on religion, so that the

religious ceremonies tend to become focussed around those events and interests that appear to be important to the group. Ames seeks to prove that the ceremonies of the group reflect the daily occupations of the male members. The provision of food is the primary interest; next to this is the sex interest. He suggests that the great outstanding occasions in the life of the group occur when the sources of food are enlarged and the supply becomes plentiful. The cohesive powers in primitive society are the female members, from whom the members of the group get their sense of kinship and blood relationship. The males, on the other hand, are the executive powers and have to supply the wants of the group. The ceremonies and rites grow out of the various activities associated with the supply of immediate needs, and they bear all through on the question of group welfare. The general position taken by Ames fails to account for certain religious customs, such as mutilations and many ascetic practices, which are opposed to the interests of physical life in the individual and the group. Ames' emphasis on the power of the ceremonies to stir and enhance the emotional life is supported by Pratt, who adds the further fact that the ceremonies tend to strengthen and establish the ideas or beliefs that lie behind the various practices. We may well believe that what the ceremonies are really meant to do is to deepen and intensify this sense of unseen presences, to make more real the dim, vague spirit world which man senses around him. This is done mainly through the intensification of emotion and the growing realization of the unity of life in the group. Their purpose is not merely to reinstate previous

emotions and kindle fresh emotions, although these are some of the effects produced. These, however, are produced in order that through them there may come an impartation of life and power from the spirits, and a deeper realization of the presence and reality of the spirit world. In other words, they constitute one of the methods through which man becomes a partaker of larger life, a sharer in the power and blessedness of the gods. Many other factors may become associated with the ceremonies in course of time, and these would tend to obscure the central and dominant purpose. Magical ideas would blend and suggest the coercion or manipulation of the spirits. Tribal experiences in times of crisis as well as superstitious ideas would further complicate the meaning of many ceremonies, making it difficult for students in a later day to understand them. But the original purpose would not be wholly lost. Other ways of achieving the same end may develop later, such as eating the god, or sharing in the totem blood, or even by the intoxication of the soma plant or hasheesh. But there is no doubt that the primary means of sharing in the divine life and getting power from the spirits or gods was the ceremonial usage of the cult. The ceremonies, when they became set and stereotyped, would tend to become dissociated from the reality, for this is always the weakness of ceremonies as such. They may be observed with scrupulous care; the minutest detail may be sedulously performed without producing the experience or creating the power and enlargement of life that they were meant to produce, and which they did in the first instance produce. It may be said, however, that in the higher religions of

the world to-day the various ceremonies are meant to bring the worshippers into closer touch with God so as to derive power and obtain an impartation of life from God. If now we ask what the psychological factors involved in the ceremonies of primitive religion are we may enumerate the following: transference, sympathetic identification, suggestion, and enlargement. In all the various ceremonies, there issues on the part of those who observe them a transference of interest from the immediate and circumscribed individual experiences and needs to the larger world of realities. This would be so, even if we granted the position of Ames, that the ceremonies are primarily social and only religious because they express the life and emotion of the community. Even here there is on the part of each member of the group a shifting of interest from his own needs and desires to the larger need of the group, and in the intensified emotion produced by the communal feast or dance there is a giving of the self to the larger whole. This would vary in degree according to the extent of the emotional excitement. It would become most complete in those who became "possessed" and gave indications of ecstatic or trance experiences. Those would tend to be regarded as the most favoured members of the group. So they may be regarded as wizards, medicine men, or, in a vague way, as priests. They would become the leaders of the ceremonies, the central figures in the cultus, because in the fuller surrender and transfer of themselves they had secured a fuller impartation of the life and power from the spirits and gods. But a similar experience would come in a lesser degree to all who took part in

these ceremonies. The transference of interest and the relaxation of thought and anxiety regarding immediate needs would yield relief, and this, coupled with the emotional excitement, would lead to a sense of a wider world and an enlargement of life in that wider world. Our fuller knowledge of Crowd Psychology makes it clear that this is one of the effects produced by a group, especially when the interests of each member are focussed on the same thing and the emotions are deeply moved. There is a fusing of each member into the larger life of the whole; a sympathetic identification with all others which yields an experience of enlargement of life and enhancement of power. This fact is still the sheet anchor of the revival preacher and the mob demagogue.

Probably, however, the most powerful factor in the psychological situation is suggestion. It is generally admitted by students in this field that primitive peoples are highly suggestible. This keen sensitiveness to suggestion may be seen in such strange happenings as the fact that when a savage receives by suggestion the idea that he will die, his death almost invariably follows in a very short time. This extreme suggestibility is appealed to in all the ceremonies of the group, and it operates in many different ways. At group ceremonies the impression is produced that it is perilous to abstain or keep apart. Such conduct would imperil the whole life of the group and bring on them the anger or vengeance of the spirits. Anti-social conduct would thus be condemned and the ceremonies would be regarded as binding customs from which no one is exempt. Magical ideas would also tell in

the same direction, as may be seen in the various taboos and prohibitions. Differing customs would grow out of different conditions of life with varying emphases on certain aspects of the ceremonial procedure. But, however the different customs arose, and whatever the stages may be by which the cultus grew, we may still hold that the ceremonies are meant to do what prayer was originally meant to do. They are means of attaining fellowship and communion with the unseen powers, so as to secure an impartation of life from them and the satisfaction of needs present and remote.

Principal Selbie<sup>1</sup> in his treatment of Prayer insists that "prayer is the expression of a nature that must so express itself." As such it is a witness to the fact that the primitive instincts of the race when they function normally, do so in a religious way. Prayer springs from these primitive instincts and "it goes back to the pre-animistic stage." Selbie will not admit that prayer is derived from the magical incantation or spell, but thinks it more likely that both spell and prayer have a common psychological root in the primitive instincts. He quotes William James's saying that "the reason why we pray is that we cannot help praying," and finds in this the basal fact in the psychology of prayer. "It springs from our relation to the universe around us, a relation that is sometimes one of dependence and at other times of antagonism." Prayer is thus "the instinctive turning to the powers that be for help," and "this lies at the root of prayer all through the ages." Selbie is dealing mainly with prayer in the more developed religious life, but he states the

<sup>1</sup> *Psychology of Religion*, chapter XI, pp. 208 f.

basal and determinative element in prayer at every stage of religious development. From the primitive cry for help or the longing for fellowship based on mingled feelings of dread and hope, prayer may grow into the loftiest spiritual communion with God, involving the complete surrender of the will and the whole self to God. But all through it preserves the essential element as an impulse rooted in the nature of man to turn to the unseen powers for help or companionship. As the conception of these unseen powers grows clearer and the ethical and spiritual aspects are perceived, so the prayers and the prayer attitude will become ennobled and purified. But the same impulse, the same essential attitude and spirit are present from first to last. So we may say with William James that "prayer in the wider sense is untouched by science, and in this sense it is the soul of religion. In it something is transacted with God. Religion must stand or fall by the persuasion that effects are produced by prayer." It sets free energy that makes for the betterment and enlargement of life. So much is prayer "the characteristic activity of religion," that we may say with Schleiermacher that "to be religious and to pray . . . is really one and the same thing," and add with Sabatier that "where the prayer of the heart is wanting there is no religion."

CHAPTER VI  
THE RISE OF RELIGIOUS IDEAS  
(*Sacrifice*)

WE are not here concerned primarily with the theories of the origin of sacrifices, nor yet with the various kinds of sacrifices that have at some time or other been offered. It will be necessary to touch on these questions but only as incidental to our main purpose of discovering the psychological factors and impulses that give rise to sacrifices and make their contribution to the meaning behind the offerings that are made. This will of necessity entail some consideration and evaluation of the different psychological theories that have been propounded as to the meaning of sacrifice, as well as an examination of the various suggestions made regarding the origin of the chief classes of sacrifices, but only in so far as these help us to a better understanding of the psychological factors operative in them.

It may be stated at once that in our view prayer precedes sacrifice, and that the impulse from which sacrifices spring and through which offerings are made to the spirits is the same as that from which prayer springs. Sacrificial offerings are a later and more developed expression of the same spontaneous movement or instinctive urge as we found in primitive prayer, more especially, though not exclusively, of the expressions of gratitude and thanksgiving. That there is a connection between them in their underlying motives is evident from the fact already mentioned, that when the practice of making sacrifices

grows the specific prayer of thanksgiving gradually disappears. Wundt, in spite of his preference for magical interpretations of the practices of the cult, has seen this connection. He holds that all the ceremonies and practices of the cult fall into three classes, Prayer, Sacrifice, and Sanctification. In his treatment of sacrifice he points out that offerings of consecration correspond to the prayer of petition, whilst votive offerings correspond to the prayer of thanksgiving. He does not state definitely that he regards them as springing from the same impulse, but the correspondence which he mentions, if traced to its source, must ultimately arise from the urge of the same impulse; it depends on the same motive. The sanctification ceremonies represent a higher stage of religious practices which are exemplified in such facts as baptism, circumcision, etc. Some of these ceremonies blend with sacrifices, and from this fusion we get the sacrificial feasts that figure so largely in the cultus of primitive peoples. We are probably safe in regarding these higher ceremonies also as expressions of the same impulse, based on the same psychological factors. Wundt, however, in accordance with his general position, regards sacrifices and prayer as operative and effective in the realm of magic.<sup>1</sup> He thinks that at first there was no idea of a gift to the spirits, but only the effort to bring magical influences to bear on them, by way of taboos that kept away the demons and unfriendly spirits, or as actions that pleased the friendly

<sup>1</sup> Karstan cites a sacrifice of the Ancient Mexicans who after slaying a human victim offered the heart to the statue of the God. This signified the offering of the vital power concentrated in the heart to *augment the power of the God*. *Op. cit.*, p. 64. Cf. the offering of the "will" mentioned in the previous chapter.

spirits and the gods. Later, however, gifts are offered to the spirits; but here also magical ideas are prominent, for the efficacy of these gifts is secured through magical influences. Ames thinks that we are to interpret sacrifices in terms of the action which is prominent in them and to which attention is called by the various practices of the cult ceremonial. This characteristic act is that of eating food. This may later acquire more advanced meanings, such as the idea of eating the god or of partaking of a meal in which the god shares. But, originally, the sacrifice "is an act that satisfies man by appeasing his hunger." It was the quality of appeasing hunger that attracted attention to the totem. "We may say that the object became sacred because it was eaten and not that it is eaten because it is sacred." It is, however, when eaten at a social or communal function that it becomes sacred and gets to be regarded as a sacrifice.

In his final estimate Ames concludes that there are two types of sacrifice—one offered for the purpose of obtaining immunity from danger, as in the case of warriors sacrificing before going to battle; the other offered to remove the peril incurred through the breaking of taboos, such as are practised at child birth or at funeral feasts. Later, there may come the idea of expelling something unclean and baneful, and from this would grow the conception of a sacrifice of atonement. But here also it is magical in counteracting evil influences, very much as in the case of broken taboos. The real value of sacrificial ceremonies lies in the fact that they consolidate the social life of the group through the intense emotional state excited by the

suggestive and mimetic elements of the ritual. The sense of solidarity produced by the common emotion is further strengthened by the sense of identity engendered by the fact of eating together and the sense of partaking in company with the mysterious beings who made up the spirit world of primitive man. Whilst the first effect of the act of eating is the realization of increased physical strength, this is greatly enhanced by the psychological impression produced through the emotions stirred and by the suggestiveness of all the ceremonial procedure. But these psychological results are dependent upon, and subsidiary to, the purely physical satisfaction of hunger and the added strength gained thereby.

Jevons, on the other hand, insists that sacrifice must be interpreted in terms of worship involving a relationship to superhuman beings, with an element of reverence and trust, as well as an offering to the spirits, the whole procedure being opposed to the motive and method of magic.<sup>1</sup>

In dealing with this question in its broad general aspects, we must note that psychologists and ethnologists have usually treated sacrifices at the stage when they form a specific element in the cultus, in other words, at a stage in the history of sacrifice that is considerably later than the truly primitive. Westermarck has traced with immense labour and detail the rise of moral ideas and religious practices,<sup>2</sup> and he finds the following motives behind the various sacrifices. (a) The desire to avert possible evils. This is the prevailing motive, and Westermarck is inclined to regard it as the source of all worship.

<sup>1</sup> Karsten says that sacrifice as a means of influencing supernatural powers is almost unknown in very backward tribes. *Op. cit.*, pp. 251 f.

<sup>2</sup> *The Origin and Development of Moral Ideas*, chapter XLVIII.

He thinks that worship begins in fear, and that sacrifices are intended as a means of warding off the dangers that may come from the baneful forces that surround life. But he insists that there is not only fear behind the sacrifices; there is also an element of hope, even though it be nothing more than the hope that the act of offering the sacrifice may be successful in averting the evil that is feared. From this basal motive and idea other ideas develop later giving rise to various forms of sacrifices. Among these we find (b) Sacrifices as a substitute for a person who is in danger of incurring the anger of the spirits. He points to the fact that this idea of substitution is found in many religions. We should, however, note that this can only arise at a considerably later time, for the practice involves ideas that are only possible in a stage of developed moral and mental life.

(c) Some sacrifices are evidently based on the idea that they exercise a restraining influence on the gods, either by way of warding off certain baneful powers which they control, or of placating them when their anger is aroused on account of disobedience or insults to their dignity. It will be evident that such sacrifices depend partly on the attitude of fear which Westermarck regards as characteristic of all forms of early religion, and partly on the idea of expiating a wrong done by seeking to make the gods propitious.

(d) Westermarck's fourth class is that of covenantal sacrifices. This is found very early, for it is probable that every compact made, or covenant sealed, was accompanied by some kind of sacrifice. In the Old Testament we find the practice of

covenant sacrifices. In the earliest case recorded an animal is cut in two and the contracting parties walk between the two portions of the severed beast.<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to divine the ideas behind such practices. Possibly the sacrifice is meant to secure the gods as witnesses to the contract made and to implicate them in the whole transaction. Thus the transaction is made more binding and a breach of contract becomes an offence punishable by the gods. A somewhat similar idea underlies the practice of making vows by naming the name of a god or invoking the presence of divine beings. This class of sacrifices implies considerable development in social life and communal relationships, and cannot have had a place in the earliest forms of sacrificial offerings.

(e) The last class which Westermarck mentions is one in which the sacrifice is thought to convey some virtue to the man who offers it, or to others on whose behalf the offering is made. It is not easy to understand what Westermarck has in mind here, for it is evident that all sacrifices are thought to bring some blessing or benefit to those who offer them, either negatively by way of warding off evil forces, or positively by securing some good. It would seem as if Westermarck is referring to some direct spiritual or magical power that is communicated to the offerers through the act of sacrificing. If this be so he has certainly touched on an important aspect of the sacrificial experience, at any rate in its later and more developed forms. In the consciousness of yielding something to God there is born a sense of receiving something from God. There comes a

<sup>1</sup> Genesis, chapter xv, verse 10.

feeling of new power, of enhancement of life and being. This, as we have seen, is an experience that comes through prayer when prayer has reached the stage of offering the self to God, and this same experience in sacrifice is a further proof that sacrifices proceed from, and are an extension of, the same impulse as is operative in prayer. On the plane of magical practices and ideas sacrifice was probably thought to start currents of magical influences that could flow into the person sacrificing. But on the religious plane the virtue derived grew to be regarded as more and more spiritual. It is certainly true that the more men surrender themselves to God and make spiritual sacrifices, the more power they derive. It is again the response of the spiritual reality to the outgoing of the spirit of man; an instance of the give and take, the systole and diastole which are at the basis of all spiritual life. We have suggested that this element is present in the earliest prayer, in however vague and fragmentary a measure it may find expression. In like manner it would seem to be an element in the primitive offerings. Dim and uncertain, mysterious and beyond understanding, some such feeling must have been present; moreover, we know that this feeling finds expression in the child mind. Thus Goethe at a very early age reared an altar in his chamber and waited for the sun light to fall on his offering expecting to obtain some gift therefrom. Olive Schreiner in her *Story of an African Farm* pictures a boy in the loneliness of the veldt building an altar; laying an offering upon it; praying for fire from heaven to devour his sacrifice, and waiting to receive some blessing through his offering. If we could analyse sufficiently the primitive

mood and attitude in sacrificing, it is almost certain that we should find a similar feeling of expectation, a dim sense that some good could be derived from the sacrifice made. In the ultimate, these were spiritual implications from which the later idea of blessing and of new spiritual power through sacrifice could grow. These spiritual implications could not have been fully present to the primitive mind any more than they were present in the mind of the child Goethe or the African boy. They could only reveal themselves to more mature processes of thought. But that they were involved in the whole act and attitude of sacrifice from the first is scarcely open to doubt. If we have interpreted Westermarck aright he has evidently realized this fact although, as we have seen, most, if not all, the types of sacrifices which he enumerates belong to a later stage than the purely primitive life.

Toy classifies all sacrifices under one or other of the following groups.

(1) Placatory sacrifices which are offered to make the spirits or gods propitious and friendly. This would correspond to the first class mentioned by Westermarck.

(2) Expiatory sacrifices offered to secure forgiveness for some wrong done, or to ward off and neutralize the punishment which such wrong deserves. This corresponds, to some extent, to the third class of Westermarck, and like that class it must be regarded as a late growth.

(3) Supplicatory sacrifices offered to secure some definite favour or blessing such as good crops, success in hunting or in battle. This falls, to some extent, into the fifth class of Westermarck, but only

in such aspects as do not involve definitely spiritual benefits.

(4) Eucharistic sacrifices as offerings of gratitude and thanksgiving for benefits received. There may be, as Heiler suggests regarding the prayers of thanksgiving, a subtle expectation of more benefits to come.

(5) Consecrative sacrifices such as the offering or consecration of the first-born to the gods, or the sacrifices accompanying vows of allegiance. It should be noted also that all these classes may be offered as individual or as communal sacrifices. Such individual sacrifices may be seen in the special offerings for lepers in the Old Testament. In the nature of things individual offerings of some kind must have preceded the communal sacrifices. But at the earliest stage known to Anthropology and the Comparative Study of Religion, the sacrifices are communal in character, either the head of the family sacrificing for his household, or the tribe and group making offerings to the tribal god. But the purely individual sacrifice is not displaced by these communal offerings. It is clear that the Semitic tradition knew of individual sacrifices before group or tribal sacrifices were offered, for the story of Cain and Abel offering each his own specific kind of sacrifice<sup>1</sup> is proof of this.

Further, sacrifices may be occasional or periodic. The occasional sacrifices are those offered under exceptional circumstances, such as times of calamity or special need. These may be communal, as in the case of offerings made in times of tribal suffering and disaster. But they are, in the main, individual

<sup>1</sup> Genesis, chapter iv, verses 3-4.

sacrifices, offered to secure special favours or to expiate personal sins. The periodic sacrifices are mainly astral, as the various feasts of the New Moon, or seasonal as the harvest feasts. These belong in general to the communal type and it is from these that the idea of a religious calendar is derived. It does not fall within the range of our study to deal with the various offerings made, except in so far as they express psychological factors, but there are certain broad principles operative here, a brief examination of which will lead us to a clearer apprehension of the psychological factors found in all sacrifices.

(a) It is well established that the kind of offering made depends on and reflects the stage of social development which the person offering has reached. We may assume that this was so in the prehistoric stage, for it is certainly so when human life comes to the plane of history. The earliest stage known to history is the nomadic, in which families or groups wandered from place to place in search of food and pasture land,—a fierce, precarious life, with frequent fights with other groups for possession of the rich lands and the wells. The wealth of the nomad consisted of his flocks and herds, and at this stage his offerings would be animal offerings; a lamb, or a sheep, or perhaps an ox. Oxen would be infrequently given since they were the transport animals. Moreover, the offerings would be occasional rather than periodic. If there were periodic sacrifices they would be astral, at the change of the moon and other astral occasions. Later, when the agricultural stage is reached, life becomes more settled and stable. Man makes a more permanent abode in

one place for he has to await the ripening and the ingathering of the crops. Further, the corn can be stored and the supply of food is secured. Life is thus not so precarious. Moreover, the stored corn becomes the basis of a new kind of wealth. Most important of all the cultivation of corn involves a forward look, a kind of incipient faith, for man has to trust the seed and the soil, and wait in hope for the harvest. So instead of living each day from hand to mouth as he did more or less in the nomadic stage, he learns to live to-day in the light of to-morrow. This forward look becomes the spring of progress in civilization as well as in moral and mental life. For this reason sociologists and anthropologists have seen in the transition from the nomadic to the agricultural stage, one of the most important steps in the upward progress of man towards moral and intellectual culture. This transition has its reactions on the religious life. Thus it brings about a change in the kind of sacrifices offered for they now become gifts of the soil, fruits of the earth, vintage, or oil, rather than animal offerings. Moreover, they tend to become seasonal and periodic rather than astral, harvest feasts with gifts of the first fruits of corn and oil. Some sacrifices, such as the Passover Feast of the Hebrews, show traces of a fusion of the two kinds of sacrifices; relics of the animal sacrifice being blended with the first fruit of the soil.

(b) A second principle appears in the introduction of the idea of value which leads to a system of sacrifices of varying degrees of worth. This principle becomes operative in two different ways. In the first place, the kind and value of the offering

differs according to the position and status of the person who makes it. A chief, or later a king, would make an offering befitting his dignity and position, costly, elaborate and with much ceremony, whereas a poor man would give of his poverty, perhaps a dove or a fowl, a handful of corn or rice, and he would do this as if ashamed of the poverty of his gift. From this idea of degrees of sacrifices would grow the feeling that the gods desired and loved costly sacrifices. It is quite possible that the practice of human sacrifice and the offering of the first-born son to the gods grew from this idea.

Here we come in sight of the second application of the conception of degree of value to sacrifices, in the fact that sacrifices vary also in accordance with the value of the blessing sought, the enormity of the wrong done, or the magnitude of the calamity feared as the result of it. This would tend to give rise to a regular scale of offerings with appropriate blessings for each offering. These principles have been deduced from sacrifices as found at a comparatively late stage when they had become more or less established as group or tribal ceremonies. But it is probable that they were present in a fragmentary form in the stage of individual and personal sacrifices that preceded the group practices: further it seems that they represent factors present in sacrifice from the very earliest. It is undoubtedly true that in the first act of sacrifice, whenever and wherever it was made, man offered that which was related closely to his mode of life. It is equally true that underlying his act was the sense of offering something that had value to the spirits or gods, coupled with the feeling that its value made it acceptable to the gods,

as well as an incipient faith in its efficacy to secure the blessing or the deliverance sought. We may well believe with Principal Selbie that "the psychological condition of the origin of sacrifice is the intense craving of humanity for contact with deity and the spirit world." It is this craving that gives rise to such later ideas as that of eating the god or the totem, or of sharing in and renewing the blood bond by a common meal at which the spirits or gods are present. Part of the urge for fuller and better life which is at the root of man's nature bears within it—or to state it more adequately, finds its impulse in—the dim consciousness that the spirit world holds the secret of such fuller life. This impulsion towards the spiritual reality is born in the sense of incompleteness, in the feeling of need for help and reinforcement. To satisfy this and gain fuller life man's spirit reaches forth, often stretching out feeble hands, if haply they may touch someone in the dark, and be comforted. Sacrifice is one of the hands thus stretched out, an effort to gain contact by giving something that has value to the spirits. We may well believe that the attitude and activity involved in the act opened an avenue into the spirit of the offerer whereby the Great Spirit of the world imparted Himself to him, thus bringing him help and renewal of strength.

When we turn to the consideration of the origin of sacrifice we find several theories which imply different psychological factors and situations. Professor W. P. Paterson<sup>1</sup> classifies the various theories under two main heads. (a) The theory that sacrifice was instituted by Divine Authority and Command,

<sup>1</sup> Article on "Sacrifice" in *Hastings Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 4.

and (b) The theories which ascribe to sacrifice a human origin. The former was the view held by most theologians until comparatively recent times. It is still held by those who advocate a primitive revelation of an exalted monotheistic faith. Modern psychology is almost wholly on the side of the view which regards sacrifice as arising naturally out of the sense of the unseen, based upon the kinship of human nature with the Divine which is at the basis of man's being. Many psychologists hold, as we have seen, that if it can be shown to arise naturally and in accordance with psychological laws, there is no room left for God and no need for Divine activity in any form. But, to say that sacrifices arise naturally does not necessarily rule out God any more than to say that the laws of nature work naturally and spontaneously rules out the continuous activity of God in and through these very laws. God's activity is seen in the nature of man as a religious being as well as in His appeal to, and calling forth of, that element of religion in worship and sacrifice. In reality, of all the facts of the world, religion is the most natural fact for man. But it is never merely natural in the sense which rules out the supernatural activity of God.

We may accept the view that sacrifice arises as a natural expression of the religious nature of man as an effort to satisfy his needs. There are thus three possible theories. (a) The Gift Theory; (b) The Table Bond Theory; and (c) The Theory of a Materialistic Sacramental Communion. The Gift theory is that which regards the offerings as gifts or presents, based on the conception of mutual and friendly intercourse between man and the spirits, and

implying the idea that the gifts will be accepted by the spirits with pleasure and gratitude. This is the view suggested by Herbert Spencer and supported by Tylor. Sacrifices thus arise from the desire in man to give gifts to the unseen powers either as expressions of gratitude and affection, or as a means of pleasing and making them propitious. There are many points in favour of this view. In the first place, it does not demand a very high level of mental growth. The impulse which is operative is found in children of every clime; and it would seem quite natural in the childhood of the race. It is the outcome of the natural impulse of the heart, an impulse of gratitude, affection, or of the desire to please. Again, the evidence of philology seems to favour this view. Thus in Sanskrit, which lies near the fountain head of all the Aryan languages, the word for sacrifices is the ordinary word for "gifts." In Greek, from the time of Homer onward, the same is true and we find it so also in Latin. In Hebrew "minha," the earliest term for offerings means "gifts." Tylor suggests that there is a definite scheme of chronological development in which we have first a gift, then an act of homage and, finally, the idea of abnegation, of giving the self or something costly to the deity. This order has much to commend it, but we must remember that the growth of these ideas depends very largely on the development of social organization and the rise of more refined religious feelings. These take time and so cannot have been present in the truly primitive state.

The Table Bond theory regards sacrifice as originating in a common meal, which the spirits or gods share with the worshippers. This conception

is thought to grow out of a circle of ideas found even in these days, that eating or drinking together is a sign of friendship, and that this act seals a bond of friendship which may extend for a limited period even to enemies, suspending, for the time being, the duties of blood revenge. Sacrifice on this view is not necessarily the expression of a friendship or kinship already felt to exist between the worshipper and the spirits, as is the case in the main with the gift theory. It is the act of forming a friendship, of establishing a bond between the offerer and the spirits and gods who share the meal. Another idea is implied which grows into prominence at a later stage. Not only is the common meal thought to knit the gods and the worshippers together in the bonds created by the interchange of hospitality, but the partaking of the same food was thought to bind them together in a common life so as to make the worshipper a sharer in the strength and life of the gods. This conception develops in the totemistic age into the theory of materialistic sacramental communion, in which the idea is found that in eating the totem the worshipper is eating the god, and that he incorporates and assimilates "not only the physical, but even the moral and intellectual qualities which were characteristic of the totem." Since the divine life was thought to reside in the sacred animals, to eat of their flesh was to receive the life and immortality of the divine. This view has been treated fully by the late Professor W. Robertson Smith,<sup>1</sup> and by Jevons,<sup>2</sup> but the bulk of modern scholarship is against it. We can scarcely regard it as primitive since it

<sup>1</sup> *The Religion of the Semite.*

<sup>2</sup> *Introduction to the History of Religion.*

implies certain social customs and ideas that could only develop at a stage somewhat remote from the primitive. The whole theory stands or falls with the view that totemism is the original and primitive form of religion. Most scholars now regard totemism as a later stage of religious development and prefer to believe that religion originates in a pre-animistic stage. Tiele refers the origin of sacrifice to this earlier period. He regards it as rooted in "the yearning of the believer for abiding communion with the supernatural power with which he feels himself akin." We may agree with Professor Paterson in his final conclusion that "amid this mass of speculation the most certain conclusion seems to be that sacrifice originated in childlike ideas of God and that the fundamental motive was to gratify Him." This would seem to favour the gift theory, although Professor Paterson is inclined to accept the view that sacrifice originated in the common meal, but not in its later form of "eating the god."

The association of sacrifice with totemistic practices and ideas brings us into contact with one of the most recent psychological theories of its origin, in the teaching of Freud. As we have already seen, Freud in his "Totem and Taboo", and more specifically in his last book<sup>1</sup>, regards religion as originating in Totemism, "springing," as he expresses it, "from a derangement in the family relationship" due to the libido of the sex instinct. Not only does he find in this the origin of religion, but he finds in it also the origin of sacrifice. We need not describe again the whole situation which he envisages since we have done so in a previous chapter.

<sup>1</sup> *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis.*

It will be sufficient to note that when the rebellious sons in the primitive horde had slain their father in order to gain possession of the females of the horde, a revulsion of feeling supervened which produced two definite and determinative results. In the first place, they felt that they could not take to themselves the women folk who had belonged to their murdered father, and herein we have the origin of sex taboo and the incest barrier. But, in the second place, the vague sense of remorse prompted them to offer a sacrifice in commemoration and expiation of their act of murdering their father. This resulted in the establishment of the totem as a sacred and sacramental animal and led to the totem sacrificial feast. Herein is the origin of sacrifice. It is based thus, as all the higher interests of life are based for Freud, on the Oedipus Complex situation, for the incipient emotion of remorse which prompts the sacrifice is rooted in the ambivalent feelings in the minds of the sons, of desire for the women and hate of the father accompanied by some feeling of respect for his authority and of regard for his example. It will be sufficient to say by way of criticism of this view: (a) That it is practically impossible, in view of recent research, to accept the theory of infantile sexuality on which it is based. Malinowski<sup>1</sup> has shown that the Oedipus Complex situation does not hold in the case of the primitive peoples he has examined, and, moreover, although he was at first an enthusiastic supporter of the Freudian position in this matter, he has now been led to change his views.

(b) Freud's theory implies that the original form

<sup>1</sup> *Sex and Repression in Savage Society*. He is dealing with the Melanesians among whom descent goes through the mother. This fact modifies his conclusion to some extent.

of sacrifice is one of expiation, its motive being to ease the conscience and remove the sense of guilt in the minds of the sons. Not only does his position in this matter assume considerable development in the life of the primitive group, but it implies a growth in moral ideas that cannot possibly have been found in primitive man. Mr. R. E. Money-Kyrle has examined and developed Freud's view of sacrifice<sup>1</sup> in a suggestive though not quite conclusive treatment of the subject.

Jung, from his general mythological standpoint, treats Sacrifice symbolically, as the expression of the child's effort and final struggle to break away from the restraints and subordinations of the infantile period. But with him, as with Freud, it is closely connected with the libido of the sex instinct.

Viewing the various theories as a whole, it is clear that the gift theory is the most natural, as expressive of the spontaneous impulse of gratitude; and we are probably safe in assuming that this was the original form.<sup>2</sup> The earliest gifts would be those which were regarded as valuable for the maintenance of life, and so meant a real sacrifice to primitive man. In other words, they would be gifts of food or of the materials that constituted food. These would change as the conditions of life changed. But originally they must have been gifts expressive of the desire to please and the natural promptings of gratitude, with the accompanying hope that they might ward off possible

<sup>1</sup> *The Meaning of Sacrifice.*

<sup>2</sup> Karstan agrees that the earliest form of sacrifice was a "gift" to the deity to secure favour or avert evil spirits and that on the whole, in religions at a low level, it is based on self interest, being of the character of barter or exchange of presents. *Op. cit.*, pp. 252 and 254.

anger and secure future increase of favour. We might analyse the primitive impulses and motives thus, into (a) the natural inclination involved in friendly relations with other beings, to give gifts as expressions of friendship. (b) The spontaneous impulse to express gratitude for good received by giving gifts, combined with the feeling that this is the means whereby friendly relations can be maintained and all unfriendly feelings neutralized or their baneful effects removed. In addition to these factors, which are basal, other elements enter into the total mental situation. Thus there is the sense that something of value must be given. This may arise either from the impulse embedded in friendship to give the best, or from the dim consciousness that the more valuable gift has a greater power of yielding pleasure or winning favour. Where, as in the earliest forms of thought, the spirits and unseen beings are regarded as needing food, gifts of food would express these feelings and satisfy the two motives. But, as Heiler has pointed out, there would probably be an element of hope, or an incipient faith that the gift would succeed in bringing the blessing desired and possibly other blessings in future. Nor is this all. If we are to judge from universal human experience, the mere fact of giving a gift would yield some satisfaction. This is confirmed at the level of child thought, as well as at the highest level of spiritual surrender. To yield oneself to God is supreme bliss to the mystic, and it is the source of the deepest joy and peace to every humble soul. It is the highest form of that give and take, of that self-giving and receptivity which are the essence of personal fellowship. It is too

much to expect that all this would be present in the primitive mind in the first act of making an offering to the Unseen. We may well believe that the dominant factor was the impulse to give something to the "Other" who was on the fringe of life. But the elements we have enumerated are implied in that simple act taken in the totality of its mental and spiritual reactions. These would grow into fuller realization at a later stage. Other ideas would develop with the growth of social life and with the clearer apprehension of moral and spiritual realities. Thus, with the development of group life and the sense of a tribal self, the sacrifice would become a group affair. This is the stage at which Anthropology and the Comparative Study of Religion first come into touch with sacrifice. In the totemistic stage, with its tendency to the worship of animals and the conception of animal ancestors, the ideas of renewing the blood bond and of eating the god would supervene, or the thought of a common meal as a seal of friendship would become characteristic of the whole ceremony. Sacrifices would then become communal feasts with all the accompanying emotional experiences. On the specifically religious side there are two results of primary importance. The common experience deepened through the emotional excitement of the whole group, strengthens and consolidates the belief in the spirits or gods to whom the sacrifice is offered and who are invisibly present at the feast. It thus leads to a more assured faith in the reality and power of the gods and of their claims on men. On the other hand, the individual members of the group, by sharing in the emotions of the crowd, experience an

enlargement of life and an enhancement of power which make, for the time being, the spiritual world bordering on the world of physical existence, real, as the source of the experience which the individuals enjoy. Their common life comes to be regarded as sharing in, and continuous with, a larger world in which is the secret of the deeper and most exultant joys of life. Here again these facts are not fully realized. But there must have been a dim sense of the reality of things unseen and a vague feeling that partaking of the sacred animal was not all. There would thus grow, through the sacrifice and its accompaniments a fuller realization of the claims of the spirit world, some consciousness of the appeal which this world makes to the spirit of man. Sacrifices in this way became the means of progressive religious development and a power that made for the enrichment of spiritual life.

With the development of higher ethical ideas, yet another element enters into the conception of sacrifice, the element of expiation. It is evident that expiatory sacrifice cannot precede a sense of sin and a consciousness of guilt, and that these imply a long period of development, and a measure of refinement of feeling impossible to primitive man. Moreover, it implies an ethical conception of God or the gods and of their readiness to pass over and forgive wrong which could only have been reached at a later date. With the development of still higher ethical and spiritual conceptions, sacrifices as specific offerings to the deity tend to disappear, or are transcended in the idea of spiritual sacrifices, the offering of the self. If we may, with Professor Lloyd Morgan, regard primitive practices and ideas

as emergent stages in the progress towards higher spiritual realities, then we may conclude that the offering of the self, as a spiritual sacrifice, is the goal to which all the earlier forms point. Each stage and every imperfect sacrifice makes its contribution only to be transcended and to pass on to a higher stage. But the spiritual offering of the self to God gathers into itself all the dim meanings and incipient yearnings that found expression in the earliest sacrifices; and all the larger ideas that develop in the intervening stages, raising them all to higher levels and expressing more fully the meaning that lies buried in the heart of all true sacrifice. If, again with Professor Morgan, we regard all these stages as steps in the realization of a divine purpose for the achievement of spiritual life, we may say that spiritual sacrifice is that which God meant sacrifice to be from the beginning, and that man in giving himself to God and to the larger good of the world is realizing his true end and reaching his real manhood. He finds himself by losing himself in God and for God. This is "the chief end of man."

## CHAPTER VII

### PSYCHOLOGY AND THE IDEA OF IMMORTALITY

IN considering the rise of the idea of a Future Life, it is doubtful whether we should regard this idea as equivalent to the idea of Immortality, for the conception of an infinite existence is beyond the capacity of primitives and of the tribes which are found at a low stage of culture in these days. We certainly find at every level the conception of the continued existence of the soul after death, but this existence is not necessarily regarded as endless, and there are certain ideas that preclude such a conception. Some tribes believe that although the soul survives the shock of death, it is not immortal, for it is regarded as possible for it still to die and so to pass out of existence. Sir J. G. Frazer and Leuba assert that there are some peoples who believe that man has no soul and that there can, therefore, be nothing to survive. Frazer mentions another fact,<sup>1</sup> that in those communities in which the spirits of the dead are feared, they are only feared for a time. After a certain period the attitude of the living towards them changes, until it becomes one of total indifference to those who have been dead for many years. He even asserts that "this sharp distinction between the spirits of the dead according to the date at which they died, is widespread, perhaps universal among mankind." In some cases also there is a more radical change, for after a period of time, the angry and malignant "ghosts" and

<sup>1</sup> *The Belief in Immortality*, Lecture 8.

"spirits" may gradually come to be regarded as friendly and beneficent. It is certainly true that a metaphysical idea of endless existence, or a full blown theory of the immortality of the soul is not found among primitive men, since the idea of eternity or of anything eternal is beyond the range of their powers. The utmost they could attain to is the thought of a long-drawn-out duration, and this would be for them the equivalent of civilized man's idea of eternity. What then we find, as Sir J. G. Frazer has abundantly illustrated in his monumental work, is the idea that the soul exists after death for a very long, or even an indefinite, period, although not necessarily for ever. But if this indefinite period is primitive man's and the modern savage's equivalent of the conception of eternity, we may maintain that implicitly he believes in immortality.

How far is it true to say that such a belief in the continued existence of the soul is universal? Frazer tends towards accepting its universality, although he cannot be quite certain. Thus he says that "belief in the survival of the human spirit after death is world-wide; it is found among men in all stages of culture from the lowest to the highest" . . . "indeed it might be hard to point to any tribe of men, however savage, of whom we could say with certainty that the faith is totally wanting among them." (p. 24 f.<sup>1</sup>) In his concluding chapter he sums up the position in these words. "It is impossible not to be struck by the strength, and perhaps we may say, the universality of the natural belief in immortality

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 29. Leuba in his latest book, *God or Man*, appears to regard it as universal, for he says that "a belief in the survival of man after death is present . . . so far as we know, among every primitive population." Chapter III, p. 35.

among the savage races of mankind. With them a life after death is not a matter of speculation and conjecture; it is a practical certainty which the individual as little dreams of doubting as he doubts the reality of his conscious existence. He assumes it without inquiry and acts upon it without hesitation, as if it were one of the best ascertained truths within the limits of human experience. The belief influences his attitude towards the higher powers, the conduct of his daily life, and his behaviour towards his fellows; more than that, it regulates to a great extent the relations of independent communities to each other. . . . Thus the belief in immortality has not merely coloured the outlook of the individual upon the world; it has deeply affected the social and political relations of humanity in all ages.”<sup>1</sup> As regards the truth or falsehood of the belief, Frazer is content to leave it an open question. Tylor, in his weighty volumes on “Primitive Culture”—a veritable treasure house of information regarding the ideas and practices of primitive peoples—concludes that religion is universal and that it originates in Animism. Animistic ideas and practices are found throughout the world. There are in Animism two great dogmas, the first being that souls exist as well as bodies, and the second that the souls of individual creatures are capable of continued existence after death. “Animism in its full development includes belief in souls and in a future state.” In a later passage he speaks of “the comparative universality of their belief in the continued existence of the soul after death.”<sup>2</sup> Professor H. R. Mackintosh,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> p. 468. The references all through are to Vol. I.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. II, chapter XII, pp. 2 f.

<sup>3</sup> *Immortality and the Future*, chapter I, p. 1.

Principal Selbie,<sup>1</sup> and Professor J. B. Pratt<sup>2</sup> may be cited as holding to the universality of the belief, whereas Leuba,<sup>3</sup> Principal Galloway,<sup>4</sup> and Höffding express doubts on the question. In the nature of things it is impossible to reach certainty on this point, but the evidence so far acquired goes a long way towards proving that the belief is universal. This position is strengthened by the growing unanimity of Anthropologists and Ethnologists as to the universality of religion and religious practices. Tylor is certainly warranted in saying that belief in an existence after death is one of the accepted ideas of religion at the very lowest stage, and throughout all the higher stages of religious development.

Pratt thinks that it is more firmly based on the human consciousness than belief in God is, for it is "more intuitively apprehended and less often based on argument."<sup>5</sup> Most scholars regard the belief as intimately interwoven with belief in God. From a philosophical point of view, it rests, in the final issue, on the rationality of the universe and on the reality of moral and spiritual values as grounded in a Rational and Ethical Personality. Sir J. G. Frazer, however, thinks that the belief can be held without any belief in God and he instances Buddhism as having no belief in God whilst holding strongly to a future life. But Buddhism arose and flourished

<sup>1</sup> *Psychology of Religion*, chapter XIV.

<sup>2</sup> *The Religious Consciousness*, chapter XI, where he bases it on the instinct of self-preservation.

<sup>3</sup> *God or Man*, chapter V. Here he is not so certain as in chapter III.

<sup>4</sup> *Philosophy of Religion*, chapter XV.

<sup>5</sup> *The Religious Consciousness*, chapter XI, pp. 225 f. We should go further and hold that if we are to regard religion "as implying the conservation and augmentation of human values," belief in God is also essential and central to it. Pratt himself would probably admit this.

on a background of Vedic and Brahmanic thought in which belief in a Supreme Principle and Ground of Being was central. Moreover, Buddhism itself, in its later development, tended more and more towards the idea of a Supreme Being, Buddha being exalted in popular thought to the position of a divine being. Frazer admits that it would be difficult to argue for the belief on philosophical grounds without a belief in the existence of God. Leuba thinks the belief is destined sooner or later to pass away. Just as the belief in God and a supernatural world is to be superseded in the coming age of Science, this belief is to share the same fate.<sup>1</sup>

Our concern in this chapter is not with the truth or falsity of the belief, nor yet with the arguments, philosophical and otherwise, by which the belief can be sustained. We are concerned rather with the light which psychology throws on the origin of the belief and the various theories regarding this origin. As preliminary to the consideration of theories of origin we may note :

(a) That the belief seems to be natural to human consciousness. There is a very wide consensus of opinion on this question. We have already quoted Frazer as saying that there is "a natural belief in immortality among the savage races of mankind." Professor Leuba states that "the . . . belief is as firmly held by the savage as the belief in the existence of objects perceived by the senses . . . and we are here in the presence not of a creation of desire, but of a belief imposed, as it were, from without in some such way as the belief in the existence of the physical world."<sup>2</sup> He points out also that the grounds from

<sup>1</sup> *God or Man*, chapter VI, p. 83.      <sup>2</sup> *God or Man*, chapter V, p. 64.

which the savage derives his ideas on the question "are for him equivalent to direct sense perception." Tylor<sup>1</sup> speaks of the doctrine as "the all but necessary outcome of savage Animism," and says that it "is a matter scarcely needing elaborate argument." Principal Selbie<sup>2</sup> regards the hope of immortality as being as "native and integral to man's religious consciousness as the idea of God and the two are closely connected," whilst Principal Galloway<sup>3</sup> says "there is something contradictory in the thought that the self whose spiritual vocation transcends the world, should itself be involved in the doom of all earthly things." Pratt<sup>4</sup> regards the belief as based on "a natural attitude of mind." He points out that children take continuity for granted and that it is the fact of death rather than the future life that has to be explained. This last point is really the strongest argument for the position here maintained. Both Frazer and Tylor make it clear that among all peoples of low culture the point of difficulty is not that of believing in the existence of spirits after death, but of explaining how death comes to break in on the continuity of this life. Frazer, after the Introduction, devotes the first Lecture in his great work to the "Savage Conception of Death" and then discusses the various "Myths of the Origin of Death." He states that "many savages not only believe in a life after death; they are even of opinion that they would never die at all if it were not for the maleficent arts of sorcerers who cut the vital thread

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, chapter XII.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, chapter XIV, p. 266.

<sup>3</sup> *Philosophy of Religion*, chapter XV. It is not implied that primitive man conceives of it in as exalted a sense as Galloway does, but that something like an intuition of this is present in the earliest form of the belief.

<sup>4</sup> *The Religious Consciousness*, chapter XI, pp. 225 f.

prematurely short."<sup>1</sup> In other words, they believe death to be unnatural; "they think that all men are naturally immortal in this life and that every death which takes place is in fact a violent death inflicted by the hand of a human enemy, though in many cases the foe is invisible and works his fell purpose not by a sword or a spear, but by magic." Frazer gives a large number of cases in which death is regarded as an unnatural fact needing explanation, and it would seem as if this view is universal among primitive peoples. On the evidence given by Frazer and Tylor we are warranted in concluding that the idea of the continuance of life after death is natural to human consciousness and that it is rooted in, and springs from, elements that lie deep in the nature of man. This would explain the widespread extension, probably the universal extension, of the belief, as well as the evident revulsion of the human mind from, and its protest against, the fact of death.

(b) Another conclusion seems to be established by an examination of primitive belief, that in some way the life that follows death is better than this life. It is quite certain that in the earliest conceptions there is no idea of moral differentiation or development in the life beyond. Ethical qualities and values never seem to enter into the thought of primitive man on this question. Moral differentiation with distinctions of place according to the conduct and ethical condition of the person who dies, as well as the idea of rewards and punishments according to this condition, are a late growth dependent on the stage of moral and spiritual culture reached. But there is from the earliest an idea that the condition

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, Lecture II, p. 33, and Lecture III, p. 84.

of the surviving spirit is in some respects better than its condition in this life. This superiority may consist in the possession of power whereby the spirit is able to work evil or good, either in vengeance on its enemies or in helping its friends. There is very little evidence to show that the condition of the spirits is regarded as one of happiness or bliss. Some tribes, however, picture the spirits dwelling in mythical islands of great beauty, under what may be regarded as ideal conditions in the sight of those who constitute those tribes and are on the same level of culture and life.<sup>1</sup> In Port Moresby the natives regard the dead as dwelling in a happy land where they never suffer hunger and are reunited to their friends;<sup>2</sup> whilst among some natives of New Guinea the spirits are thought to go through a cleft in a rock to the spirit world called Lamboam, where "everything is fairer and more perfect than on earth. The fruits are so plentiful that the blessed spirits can, if they choose, give themselves up to the delights of idleness; the villages are full of ornamental plants."<sup>3</sup> Leuba is probably correct in stating that although the savage holds firmly to the belief in the existence of spirits after death, "there is no indication that he desires a future life"; and, moreover that "his own future concerns him but little."<sup>4</sup> The fact that the savage does not seem to desire a future life is, however, not a conclusive proof that he regards the condition of the spirits in that life as unattractive and undesirable, for it is probably true of the great majority of Christian people

<sup>1</sup> See Frazer's *The Belief in Immortality*, Vol. I, Lecture 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Lecture 9.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Lecture 14.

<sup>4</sup> *God or Man*, chapter V, p. 64.

whose ideas of the future are coloured with glowing hopes and blissful anticipation, that they are not anxious to leave this life. Only a very few desire "to depart . . . which is far better." It is evident, however, that under certain aspects and among some peoples the future life has some elements that are unattractive; for we know that among peoples of a considerably higher culture, such as the ancient Semites, the conception of life in Sheol was certainly uninviting. Further, it would seem that among some savage peoples, there is an idea that the spirits are jealous of the living. This feeling of jealousy is the cause of their anger and malignant attitude, not only towards their enemies, but even towards their friends. This fact implies that the condition of the spirits is less desirable than that of the living. We are probably on safe ground in holding that in the great majority of cases the future life is regarded as better in some respects than life in the world, and although in some cases the spirits are jealous, there are many cases recorded by Frazer and Tylor in which the spirits are friendly and exert themselves for the benefit of those who are their kin.

In passing to examine the question of the origin of the idea, we have first to note that the whole question is complicated by its connection and interactions with the problem of the idea of spirit in distinction from the body. Further, it is clear that the same causes are assigned to the rise of the idea of a future life as are given to the perception of this distinction. Thus Herbert Spencer, and after him many other thinkers in the same field, held that the idea of a spirit as distinct from a body arose mainly through dreams or through the observed likeness of

children to some of their ancestors. But we may regard it as true that a vague idea of spirits must have existed before the inference could be drawn or the impression formed that in dreams some of the dead had been seen, or that the dreamer's own spirit had been away hunting, or on some other expedition.

Probably the first idea or awareness of anything distinct from the body came through the fact of death.<sup>1</sup> The fact of death is sufficiently striking and important to call attention to itself in a way that makes it stand out from the more ordinary facts and experiences of life. It is certain, therefore, that the dead body would be an object of special interest to the living, more especially if it were the body of one closely associated with them in life. It would stir an element of dread as something mysterious or as the possible bearer of malignant and evil powers. But, whatever other ideas it may stir, we may well imagine that the primary and the most evident impression was the sense that something had gone out of the body; something that gave it its power of movement and activity; something therefore of a dynamic nature. The first observable difference between the living and dead body was that the breath had gone forth or ceased, or, in the case of a death wound, that the blood had flowed forth. This is why, in the very earliest phases of thought, the vague and fragmentary idea of spirits is always associated with the breath and the blood, these being regarded as the seat of life. At any rate, it was clear that something distinct from the body itself had gone out of it, and this was something that could be

<sup>1</sup> Wundt is of the opinion that the conception of spirits came originally through the fact of death.

driven or drawn out by sorcery, witchcraft, or some other magical power. It is undoubtedly in this dim sense that something had gone forth from the body that we are to find the first vague idea that there is in man something different from the body. This is the root out of which the conception of spirits grew. Dreams and family likenesses would strengthen, and in some ways clarify, the idea, but it is doubtful if these could give rise to the idea itself, since the very interpretation given of these dream experiences presupposes an idea of spirits. But we have also to add that it is otherwise with the idea of the continued existence of the spirit after it has left the body. Here, undoubtedly, dream experiences and family likenesses must have played an important part, for the visit of a dead friend or foe in dream experience could only be understood on the supposition that his spirit, or the unseen factor that had gone out of the body at death, still continued to exist. Professor Leuba has noted also the fact that visions, hallucinations, and even induced emotional experiences, probably contributed to the same circle of ideas of survival.

Few psychologists or students of comparative religion have touched on the bearing of natural phenomena on the rise of the idea of survival, yet it is probably true that natural facts exercised a more decisive influence than even dreams or family likenesses, and that this influence was exerted prior to that of dreams and observed resemblances to ancestors. Wundt observes that only one belief is found universally among primitive people, that in an eclipse the sun is swallowed by a dark demon. There is evidence, however, of a widespread belief

that at sunset the sun dies and is reborn again next morning. Many myths have such a conception as their ground and motive. Further, we know that the great nature myths of all lands centre around the fact of fertility, the conception of vegetation dying being correlated with the idea of something continuing to exist that can rise to new life, or be reborn in the spring. Such myths reflect a phase of thought later than the primitive, but they bear witness to the facts and experiences that were of predominant interest to primitive man. His food supply, and his life as dependent on this, rested on this fact of returning life after the apparent death of winter time. It was almost inevitable that he should reach the conclusion, when spring time came, that something had lived on in spite of seeming death. In just the same way with regard to sunset and sunrise. With the animistic or even pre-animistic feeling that the dynamic forces of the world were personal forces on an analogy of man's own personal force, blending with this observation of the setting and returning sun or the dying and reviving vegetation, we have the factors and materials out of which a vague idea of survival after death might issue. Dreams and resemblances would fix and make coherent the vague impressions thus attained, but probably the impression itself is prior to the effect of such dream experiences as primitive man may enjoy.

Probably something may have to be allowed to the instinct of sex in this field. Professor Stanley Hall regards the idea of survival as derived from a "dream wish" very much in the sense of Freud's unfulfilled sexual wish, and Freud himself definitely connects the idea with the sex instinct. He says

that the idea of immortality is derived from the desire on the part of man to regress to the omnipotence which he enjoyed in the womb, however we may understand this. Probably he means that it is derived from the very vigour of the will to live which first comes to expression in the germinal process within the womb, for in his "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" he works out the thesis that in the very substance of the reproductive cells there are two elements, one of which harks back to the very initial stages of development . . . and is "able to win what must seem to us to be potential immortality." He goes on to insist that "by the mingling of two cells and by this only is the immortality of living substance among the higher forms of life assured." Jung, on the other hand, seems to connect the rise of the idea with natural forces, more especially with the sun, for he points out that some solar myths represent one sun as mortal and the other as immortal, and that this is a projection representing the mortal and immortal parts of man.<sup>1</sup> Later, in connection with the Siegfried legend, he insists that the course of the invisible sun and the idea of his survival, even when he has set, "has supplied the mystery of human life with beautiful and imperishable symbols; it became a comforting fulfilment of all the yearning for immortality and of all the desire of mortals for eternal life."<sup>2</sup> If we have interpreted Freud correctly as basing the idea on the energy inherent in the life force itself, as this finds expression in the will to live and to live more fully, we may be prepared to find some implicit sense of it, or a vague disposition towards it, in the

<sup>1</sup> *Psychology of the Unconscious*, p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 235.

urge of life in its creative and reproductive aspects. There must always be some dim consciousness of future possibilities and a sense of prolonging life inherent in the creative and reproductive act. It may be argued against this that among many of the lowest tribes there seems to be complete ignorance of the relation between sex and birth, and no realization of any connection between the intercourse of the sexes and the procreation of offspring. But this objection when examined lends support to the position we have stated, for when those tribes seek to explain childbirth, in the absence of any knowledge of the real facts, they do so by asserting that it is the spirit of someone who has died that has entered into the woman and brought about a new child. Among many peoples the spirits are regarded as inhabiting certain definite spots or even specific objects. Women will avoid such spots or objects lest the spirits may possess them; and when a child is born, its birth is explained by supposing that such a possession has taken place without the knowledge of the woman concerned. In other words, they bring in the idea of surviving spirits and associate them with the fact of birth.<sup>1</sup> Further still, the widespread idea of the transmigration of souls, which is one of the most important aspects of this belief in immortality among primitive peoples, implies some connection with both birth and rebirth and so some relation to the sex instinct and sex activity.

There may be a disposition in some circles to stress the sexual factor unduly, but we may, at any rate, believe that however and whenever the idea of future existence appeared, it was bound up with the

<sup>1</sup> See Frazer *op. cit.*, *passim* for this.

instinct of self-preservation and that it issued out of a vague sense of the worth of life implicit in the effort to preserve it. Pratt insists strongly on this.<sup>1</sup> He states that "if we analyse the emotional form of the conviction we find that in most cases it is based on the direct apprehension of the essential worth of the self, going back probably to the instinct of self-assertion, if indeed it does not go back further than any instinct." One of the most cogent and impressive modern arguments for a future life is based on the value of human life and the conservation of the ethical and personal values. Canon Streeter has taken an even wider view and based it on "what the Universe is worth." He states the problem to be that of "making sense" of a universe capable of producing men and heroic souls and then letting them perish out of existence for ever. So "in the belief in immortality the rationality of the Universe is at stake." It is certain that such a conviction could not have been present in primitive man; but, implicit in his dim sense of something that was worth, or perhaps "worthwhile," so that it continued to exist when the body had died, was this larger faith and deeper reason which subsequent thinkers have found embedded in this conviction.

It may, on the contrary, be argued that there is very little sense of the value of life among savage peoples, and that human life in general is held very "cheap" so that it may be sacrificed with comparative indifference. Such practices as the abandonment of little children; the deliberate extermination of the distorted and weak; the neglect of the aged, even of aged parents, and in some cases their sacrifice

<sup>1</sup> *The Religious Consciousness*. Chapter XI.

at the first sign of weakness or senile decay, prove how low is the sense of the worth of human life among the primitive tribes of to-day. Moreover, the wholesale slaughter of captives of war and the customary cannibal feasts associated therewith are cited as proofs of the same low estimation of human life, as is also the fact that savages seem able by auto-suggestion, or by brooding, to bring about their own death in a short time and apparently with almost complete indifference. These facts undoubtedly suggest a failure to appreciate the value of life as such, but most of the practices enumerated have references to the lives of other men and do not necessarily prove that the savage has no sense of the value of his own life, prompting him to regard it as worth while making a struggle to preserve it. It is quite certain that only those who thus feel it worth while and make the struggle for self-preservation will be able to survive. The others will gradually be eliminated, for the principles of evolution hold here as in the other aspects of human life. The slaughter of war captives can be explained on other grounds, whilst the cannibalism of the feasts would seem to suggest that they are based on a sense of the value of something in life, for it is generally held that in eating the flesh of the enemy some portion of his strength and courage is added to those who eat. It is not unlikely that this idea was the root out of which cannibalism originally grew. Pringle-Pattison,<sup>1</sup> in discussing primitive ideas of immortality, points to the strange way in which, through mistakes and absurdities, and in spite of superstitions and irrationalities, savages seem to arrive at conceptions

<sup>1</sup> "The Idea of Immortality," Lecture 1, p. 3 f.

that have a measure of truth, and which mark the steps in the progress towards higher and nobler conceptions. He quotes Sir J. G. Frazer as saying that man "may be the most rational of the beasts, but certainly he is the most absurd. . . . Yet the odd thing is that in spite of, and perhaps in virtue of, his absurdities man moves steadily upwards. . . . From false premises he often arrives at sound conclusions; from a chimerical theory he deduces a salutary practice." Pringle-Pattison speaks of the fact here stated as "the unconscious reason operative in human history guiding men to issues beyond the scope of their immediate purpose or the compass of their conscious reflection." . . . "The unconscious logic of their (savages') belief in immortality, appears to be that whatever lives will go on living indefinitely, unless brought to a violent end by the blow of an enemy or the even more dangerous arts of the sorcerer." He insists also that the roots of a belief may lie "deeper than the associations which suggested it, or the flimsy arguments at first advanced in its support." Following the suggestion here made, we may regard the "unconscious logic" or "the implicit reason" of the sense of the worth of life as leading man to a dim apprehension of its continuance, in some such way as the instincts, without having any definite knowledge of the end, and with nothing more specific than a vague feeling that something is "worthwhile,"<sup>1</sup> yet have a sense that there is an end implicit in the very instinctive urge itself. This "unconscious logic" of continuance operative in the primitive mind led it to beliefs and ideas that in spite of many absurdities and immoralities, were

<sup>1</sup> See Drever, *Instincts in Man*, for a working out of this point.

yet on the line of progress towards a more elevated and reasonable faith. Later conceptions may develop and elaborate arguments may be brought forward to prove the faith in continuance to be true, but these can add nothing to the undoubting certainty with which primitive man held to the fact of continuance, and they are almost all based on that sense of the worth of life from which his first dim faith arose.

Stratton<sup>1</sup> stresses this fact from a somewhat different standpoint. "The feeling that I have something within which is eternally of worth and which the universal power will protect and treasure marks the young and hopeful type the world over." . . . "There is a fine spiritual egoism in the belief in immortality. Even the belief in eternal damnation is really an inverted utterance of the feeling of individual worth." The "feeling of individual worth," especially when it is stimulated by dangers and deepened by continuous conflict, as it must have been in primitive man, carries implicitly within it the germ out of which the hope and faith in the continuance of life and its survival after death grow. This is its primary root or basic principle and all else is a strengthening or a confirmation of this. Dreams, visions, family likenesses, all other contributory factors to the belief, fall on this background and operate within the circle of this primary and implicit consciousness that what has worth will survive. The movement of subsequent thought has not been towards greater certainty, for with the growth of knowledge in physiology and other sciences, there has come in many quarters a sense of

<sup>1</sup> *The Psychology of Religious Life*, chapter I, pp. 23 f.

uncertainty and in others a complete abandonment of the faith in immortality. But in the circles where the faith is still held, the growth has been in the moralization and spiritualization of the ideas associated with the faith. Probably the most important development is the perception that mere survival as such may have little value, unless it is survival under better conditions and conditions which make progress possible. A static, unprogressive survival has nothing to commend it; such a view makes little or no appeal to the modern mind. It is not sufficient even to regard the future life as one that conserves the moral and spiritual values already attained; it must yield the possibility of the augmentation of these values; the eternal enhancement of those factors that make personality a thing of worth. Here lies the weakness of some theories of transmigration and such ideas as Karma with its endless circle of existences. Here too we may perhaps see the superiority of the Christian conception of a life of progress in the likeness of Jesus Christ until "we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is."

Some schools of modern psychology, such as the Behaviourists and all the Functional Schools which deal exclusively with the physiological processes of the brain, leave no room for any faith in a future life. Psycho-analysis, with its emphasis on the "psyche" and its psychical interpretation of the facts of experience, yields at least a ground on which the faith may be held. But it is noteworthy that the leaders of this school, such as Freud, Jung and Adler, have little to say on this question, the logic of their systems taken as a whole being against any continuance, except that which lives on in subsequent

generations or in the "soul life of the race." Gestalt Psychology also has room within its outlook for a belief in a life beyond, but as yet this is unexplored territory for the thinkers in this field. The main contribution of psychology to the modern views on the subject lies in the clearer and more specific view of personality which it has made possible to us.

In passing on to consider primitive ideas as to the kind of life which the spirits enjoy, and the conditions under which they live, we note first the fact already mentioned that in general the life and its conditions are regarded as better than in this life. It is generally believed that the life of the spirit is a continuation of this life, both in its interests and its needs. Thus it is thought that the spirit will need food: food will therefore be laid on the grave or in the haunts frequented by the person during life. If he is a chief he will need slaves, and in many cases slaves will be slain so that he may have their services in the other world. Horses, dogs, and even wives may have to suffer death to supply his needs. So it would appear that life there is a replica of this life. The psychological ground of all such ideas is to be found in the inability of primitive man to conceive of spirit apart from some material basis. It needs a long philosophic training to be able to conceive of pure spirit, and it is doubtful even then whether anyone can form a definite conception of pure spirit apart from some substantial basis.<sup>1</sup> Pfeleiderer has pointed out that it takes a long time for a child to reach any idea of "spirit" at all, and still longer to conceive of it as able to exist in any condition without some bodily form. How much longer must

<sup>1</sup> It may be regarded as a spiritual substance or body.

it have taken primitive man to come to such a conception! So we find that the primitive conception of spirit is that of a replica of the body, smaller and of a vaporous and more ethereal matter. Under such conditions it was a perfectly natural inference that this replica of the body should have the same needs and interests as the body. This idea has coloured all primitive thought with regard to the conditions of life in the spirit world. Most of the burial customs and many funeral feasts grow out of this conception. It remains true, as Frazer has seen, that in the great majority of savage beliefs, the life of the spirit "is a shadowy continuation of life on earth." There would seem to be no sense of moral differentiation, although later, with the development of the idea of moral life and moral worth, such ideas are introduced into the spirit world. When this happens we have passed far beyond the stage of primitive life and thought. It is no part of our study to consider the various modern arguments for a future life. We might point out, however, that the faith that the soul survives after death, purified of most of the irrelevancies that cling to it in primitive man, has exercised a profound influence on man's life in this world. It is probable, as Pringle-Pattison has pointed out, that some thinkers have attributed too much influence to the belief in this respect. He quotes Renan as saying:<sup>1</sup> "The day in which the belief in an after life shall vanish from the earth will witness a terrific moral and spiritual decadence. Some of us, perhaps, could do without it, provided only that others held it fast. But there is no lever capable of raising an entire

<sup>1</sup> "The Idea of Immortality," Lecture 9, p. 182 f.

people, if once they have lost their faith in the immortality of the soul." One of the leading modern psychologists, William McDougall, seems to agree with this position, for he "gravely doubts whether whole nations could rise to the level of an austere morality or even maintain a decent standard of conduct,"<sup>1</sup> if this faith passed away. Moreover, he believes that it is "highly probable that the passing away of this belief would be calamitous for our civilization." This, as Pringle-Pattison points out, is to make the faith carry too much, for it goes too far to "stake the whole character of the universe as rational and righteous on the question of our personal survival or non-survival." In some aspects such as excessive "other-worldiness," or the sensuous dreams of some systems, its influence may be detrimental and unethical. But as fostering the "forward look" and embodying the spirit of hope it has made for progress; whilst in the struggle of life, and more especially in the sorrows for lost loved ones, it has yielded comfort and support to the souls of men. There is no doubt that it yielded some such comfort to primitive man, for love's ache for the loved ones would even then be sharp and would follow them beyond death. It is undoubtedly true that the desire for a future life for our loved ones is stronger than for ourselves, for we may be prepared "to perish if only they may live." But this very longing for life for them carries implicitly within it a desire for our own, since "they without us cannot be made perfect." It is within this community of love; in the whole of love which includes God as well as our loved ones, that we find at last the sure

<sup>1</sup> See the Preface to his work on *Body and Mind*.

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# INDEX

## A

- Adler, 19, 230  
Ames, 50, 149, 152, 158, 164, 168,  
172, 183 f., 191  
Animatism, 117 f.  
Animism, 120, 214, 217  
Anthropomorphism, 112 f.  
Augustine, 11

## B

- Baillie (Prof. John), 34, 65, 90, 94  
Barth (Karl), 20  
Bartlett (Prof. F. C.), 44, 53, 56,  
68, 122  
Bergson, 69 f.  
Bosanquet (Bernard), 104  
Brown (Dr. William), 69  
Brunton, 137  
Burnett, 110, 158

## C

- Caird (Edward), 29, 63, 123  
Caldicott, 89  
Causation, 112, 138  
Child Mind, 119 f.  
Clavier, 122, 138  
Collective representations, 50 f.  
Cornford, 95 *note*  
Crawley, 158

## D

- Drever (Prof. James), 21, 44, 60,  
64  
Durkheim, 50 f., 110, 131, 136,  
153

## E

- Edwards (Dr. D. Miall), 57 f., 91 f.

## F

- Father and Father Image, 112,  
124 f.  
Frazer (Sir J. G.), 149, 173, Chap.  
VII, *passim*  
Freud, 12, 14 *note*, 29, 45 f., 66,  
118 *note*, 124 f., 171 *note*, 205,  
223, 230

## G

- Galloway (Principal G.), 39, 41,  
60, 89, 215, 217  
Garvie, (Dr. A. E.), 41, 69  
Gestalt Psychology, 231  
"Gifford Lectures," 16, 94, 123,  
160  
Gift Theory, 202 f.  
Gordon (Dr. G. A.), 234  
Gwatkin, 104

## H

- Hall (Dr. Stanley), 49, 223  
Harrison (Miss Jane), 95 *note*  
Heiler, 85 *note*, 98, 162 f., 177, 197,  
208  
Herd Instinct, 49 f.  
Hoernlé (Prof. R.F.A.), 16 f.  
Hocking, 55, 63, 78 f., 89, 107,  
152, 157  
Höfding, 39, 54, 64, 90, 215

## I

- Instinct of self preservation, 54 f.  
Intercessory Prayer, 168, 175 f.

## J

- James (William), 15, 49, 66, 108,  
152, 156, 188  
Jastrow (Morris), 68, 89  
Jevons, 149, 152, 156, 162, 192,  
204, 234  
Jones (Dr. Rufus), 108  
Jung, 19, 30, 46, 98 *note*, 127 f.,  
207, 224, 230

## K

- Kant, 64, 75, 94, 111  
Karma, 230  
Karsten (Rafael), 53 *note*, 56 *note*,  
119 *note*, 148 *note*, 161 f., 166  
*note*, 190 *note*, 192 *note*, 207 *note*

## L

- Lang (Andrew), 149

Law of Contagion, 174  
 Law of Similarity, 173  
 Leuba, 14 *note*, 29, 42 f., 57, 74,  
 82 f., 97, 105, 118 *note*, 124 f.,  
 137 f., 149, 169, 173 f., 181, 212,  
 215, 219  
 Lévy-Bruhl, 50, 110, 152  
 Libido, 46, 126 f., 205  
 Lloyd-Morgan, 44, 210, 211  
 Lotze, 92

## M

Mackintosh (H. R.), 81, 105, 214  
 Malinowski, 206  
 Mana, Chapters II and III and  
*passim*  
 Maret, 39, 56, 62, 69, 109, 121,  
 137, 149, 168 *note*  
 McDougall, 21, 55 f., 88,  
 112 *note*, 150 f., 180, 233  
 Moberley, 106 *note*  
 Morgan (W.), 94  
 Müller, Max, 61  
 Mystery Religions, 47

## O

Oedipus Complex, 30, 46, 206  
 Otto, 62, 89

## P

Paterson (W. P.), 201 f.  
 Pfeiderer, 42, 63, 89, 95 *note*, 231  
 Piaget, 118 f., 138  
 Power of the Word, 167  
 Pratt, 44, 66, 100, 149, 157, 183,  
 215 f.  
 Principle of Participation, 51 f.  
 Pringle-Pattison (Professor), 26,  
 34, 65, 90, 101, 146, 227 f.  
 Projection, 11, Chapter IV, 124 f.  
 Pygmies, 163

## R

Raven (Canon), 16  
 Reality Principle, The, 118 *note*  
 Reinach (M. Solomon), 80  
 Religion of Greece, 141 f.  
 Religion of Israel, 141 f.  
 Renan (Ernest), 232

Ritschl, 89  
 Rivers, 159

## S

Sabatier (Auguste), 40, 62, 89, 188  
 Schleiermacher, 62, 89, 96, 188  
 Selbie (Principal), 152, 158, 187,  
 201, 215, 217  
 Sex Instinct, 45 f., Chapter IV,  
*passim*  
 Siegfried Legend, 224  
 Smith (Robertson), 82, 149, 204  
 Söderblom, Archbishop, 98, 152,  
 160 f.  
 Sorley, 26, 94, 101  
 Spencer (Herbert), 61, 203, 220  
 Starbuck, 48  
 Stout (Professor G. F.), 21, 44  
 Stratton, 116, 150, 229

## T

Table-bond Theory, 202 f.  
 Tansley, 50, 124, 129 f.  
 Teratism, 117  
 Thouless, 41, 117  
 Tiele, 89, 152, 205  
 Totem and Taboo, 30, 45, 205  
 Totemism, 52, 145, 205  
 Toy, 196  
 Trotter, 50  
 Tylor (E. H.), 137, 156, 203,  
 Chapter VII, *passim*

## U

Unity and Uniformity of Nature,  
 112, 130

## W

Ward (James), 26, 101, 106 *note*  
 Watson (Professor J. B.), 13  
 Webb (Professor Clement), 15, 52,  
 110, 152  
 Westermarck, 111 *note*, 192 f.  
 Whitehead (Professor), 57, 154  
 Will Magic, 174 f.  
 Woodworth, 13, 21  
 Wundt, 56 *note*, 64, 122, 132 f.,  
 143, 149, 176, 190, 221 *note*, 222

## Y

Yoga discipline, 176

## CHAPTER I

### THE RELATIONS BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGY AND RELIGION

PSYCHOLOGY, as one of the branches of philosophy, is involved in the general relation between philosophy and religion, but in so far as it deals with mental and psychic facts, it is more closely related to religion than any other philosophical discipline, with the possible exception of ethics. Philosophy has been described as "the effort to think things whole." It seeks to unify all the facts of the world and of experience; to range them under one supreme principle and so bring them into one comprehensive and coherent system. The subject matter of philosophy is thus as wide as the Universe, all the choir of heaven and the furniture of earth. It has to take into its purview all existent facts and experiences; and in a sense all possible facts and experiences, from the electron or atom up to the finished world, and from the experiences of an amoeba up to those of an archangel and even of God Himself. If all the countless facts of the world are to be brought thus under one ruling principle, it will be evident that the supreme task of philosophy is that of finding this principle. This may also be said to be the quest of religion. It is man's effort to reach that Ultimate or Absolute Reality in which he may find satisfaction and peace. Religion has other aspects besides this search for God. It means the enjoyment of God and the bliss of fellowship with Him. It may be described as a relation of the spirit of man to the

Eternal Spirit, or an attitude which man takes to the great spiritual realities of the world. As such it is a measure of intercourse with God on the basis of love and sacrifice. Religion may also be regarded as service rendered to God, as the obedience of man to His law, or the response of man's moral consciousness to the appeal of the moral Universe which is grounded on the ethical nature of God. But prior to, and implicated in, all these aspects, is the quest for God; the longing of the soul in its sense of need for support and succour amid the difficulties and the hostile forces of the world; the cry of the human heart for its completion, or the yearning of the exile for his home. Only when this quest has brought the soul into intercourse with Him can it enjoy Him and taste peace. Moreover, its service and obedience are only at their best when they flow from the discovery of God and are inspired by the love which that discovery evokes.

The quest of religion is thus identical with that of philosophy, but they are not the same for otherwise there would be no need and no room for the two in the world. Though their ultimate quest may be for the same Reality they do not travel along the same road, nor do they reach the same point in the progress towards the goal. It will be well to examine the differences here.

Philosophy seeks for the Ultimate Reality as a purely intellectual quest. Its primary aim is to find the principle that can give coherence to the system of the world and form a crown to the intellectual construction in which man seeks to interpret and understand the Universe. It is urged to its goal by the intellectual need for Unity. Its final